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By Robert Kuttner



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JANUARY 20, 1986

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TRB[®]

FROM WASHINGTON

INCREDIBLE DR. HAMMER

On March 4, 1976, Dr. Armand Hammer appeared in a Los Angeles federal courtroom to plead guilty on charges of making illegal secret contributions to the 1972 Nixon campaign. He was wheeled in in a wheelchair. Cardiologists monitored his heartbeat on equipment installed in a nearby witness room. Hammer, his lawyers said, was dying of heart disease. The case had been transferred from Washington because the 77-year-old chairman of Occidental Petroleum was said to be too weak to travel.

"In the time that may be left me," Hammer said at sentencing, he hoped "to continue being a useful member of society." In light of Hammer's advanced age and poor health, the judge sentenced him to a year's probation and a \$3,000 fine. (The employee who carried out Hammer's illegal payments got four months in jail.) One of Hammer's lawyers described him as "a sick old man [who] lives four blocks from the office, goes in late, goes home for lunch, and takes a nap in the afternoon."

That does not sound like very promising material for a coffee-table photo album entitled *The World of Armand Hammer*, one of the strangest publishing ventures of 1985. But "this incredible man"—as Walter Cronkite all-too-accurately describes Hammer in his sycophantic introduction—underwent a miraculous medical recovery when his legal troubles ended. In May 1976, just two months after his pathetic court appearance, Hammer stood at the podium at Occidental's annual meeting and, according to the *Los Angeles Times*, "displayed his characteristic forceful personality," parrying hecklers and dismissing his crimes as "insignifi-

cant." By October he was back in Moscow, scene of his first business triumphs. And now, at age 87, Hammer declares in this book, "I work fourteen hours a day, seven days a week. . . . I never feel my age."

Published by a company that specializes in lavish art books, *The World of Armand Hammer* consists of 255 oversized pages of color photographs of Hammer and the things and people he surrounds himself with. Although the photos and the minimal text are by one John Bryson, this clearly is an Armand Hammer production. Hammer commissioned it and was subsidizing it himself until the directors of Occidental generously voted to let the shareholders pick up the tab. (That information comes not from the book but from the *Wall Street Journal*.)

The vanity of this enterprise almost defies description. Along with chapters on Hammer's life story (highly selective), his company, his travels, and his good works, there are separate chapters on each of his three homes, on his airplane, and on his office (with, for example, a close-up of the clock on his desk). The general topic of Hammer's fondness for other VIPs, and theirs for him, is subdivided into chapters titled "Movers & Shakers," "The Royal Family," "The Beautiful People," and "Washington Elite."

Apart from one obvious customer, is there a market for this preposterous book? There may be. *The World of Armand Hammer* is the ultimate example of what might be called "executive porn." In this age of the glamorized businessman, serious business magazines like *Fortune* and glitzy upstarts like *Manhattan, Inc.* regularly feed their readers' gray-flannel fantasies with salacious photos of high-powered executives posed with suggestive self-importance against a backdrop of corporate luxury. But this book breaks new ground in financial lasciviousness.

The World of Armand Hammer observes the somewhat contradictory conventions of executive porn. On the one hand, the important executive has overwhelming duties and works all the time. On the other hand, he socializes incessantly with famous people in fancy surroundings. On top of everything, he is constantly on the move.

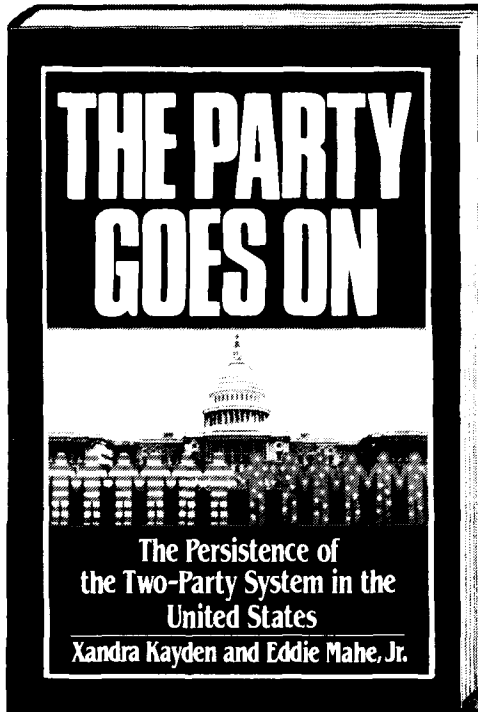
Among its many riches, *The World of Armand Hammer* contains a foot-square blowup of Hammer's pocket calendar

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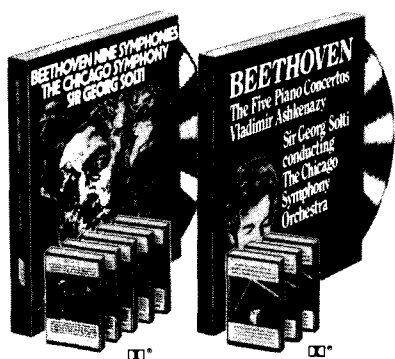
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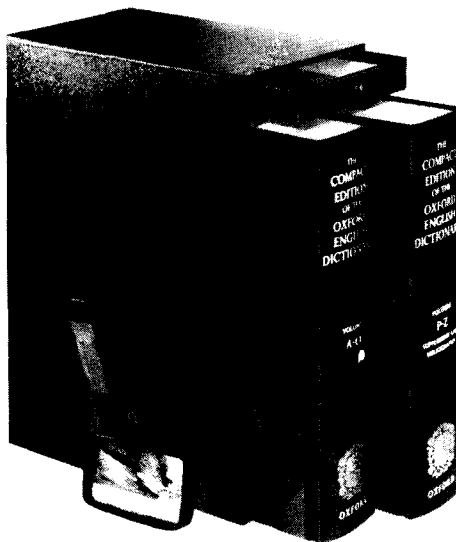
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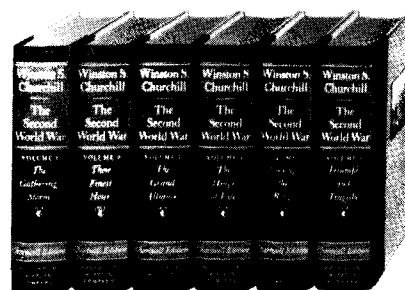
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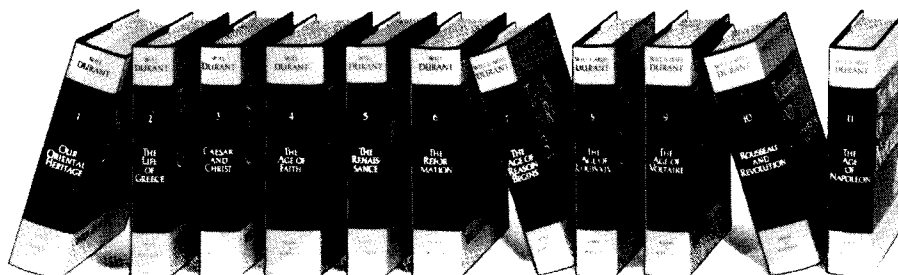
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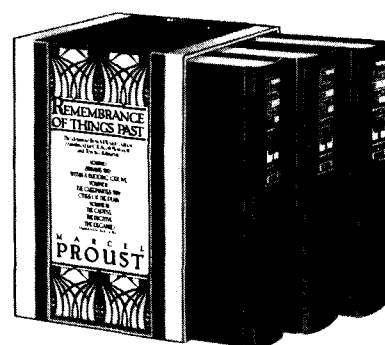


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CORRESPONDENCE

REFLEXIVE JUDGING

To the editors:

In "White House Watch: Judging Judges" (December 9), Fred Barnes treats the nomination of Lino Graglia as a test case: if the Reagan administration goes ahead with the nomination, it will be a "victory for ideology." He suggests it will also be a defeat for competence, because the ABA's Standing Committee on the Judiciary voted eight-to-four that Professor Graglia was not qualified.

I know nothing about the bases for the ABA evaluation of Mr. Graglia, and Mr. Barnes reveals nothing beyond the ranking. I do know that one of the ABA's primary criteria is trial experience. This is an idiosyncratic test; under such a standard, Holmes and Frankfurter would have been ranked unqualified. Mr. Barnes might well have given some critical thought to our odd practice of allowing a private, self-interested organization a quasi-official role in assessing potential judges. Reflexively treating the ABA ranking as pivotal will make it harder to secure truly qualified people for the federal appellate courts.

ROBERT F. NAGEL

Professor of Law
University of Colorado, Boulder

STONE SUPPORT

To the editors:

Jacob Weisberg's piece on Roger Stone ("State of the Art Sleazeball," December 9) overlooked some important facts. First, it is true that I ran on a platform of cutting taxes in 1981. But it is also true, although Mr. Weisberg fails to report it, that we have cut them. As soon as we had erased the deficit left to me by the previous Democratic administration, we began cutting. Since then, we have eliminated burdensome taxes on small businesses, enacted a tax cut to help fledgling high-tech companies, virtually eliminated our state's inheritance tax (which had been one of the highest in the nation), and enacted the first income tax cut in New Jersey's history. Mr. Stone, incidentally, strongly advised me to sign this last bill, which was a controversial one here in New Jersey.

Second, although Mr. Weisberg apparently does not follow the details of New Jersey electoral politics, we *did* win a Republican majority in the state As-

sembly this year—just as Mr. Stone had predicted to the "credulous" reporter cited in the article. And we are well on our way to achieving majority status for the GOP in the state. Whereas the percentage of New Jerseyites identifying themselves as Democrats was twice that of Republicans as recently as 1978, recent statewide polls show party identification to be about equal.

Mr. Weisberg, with his newly acquired political expertise, may choose to belittle Mr. Stone's campaign skills, but I have found Roger Stone to be a competent and incisive political adviser. And by the way, he has never lobbied me on anything.

THOMAS H. KEAN

Governor
New Jersey

MANY-SIDED BATHHOUSE

To the editors:

Regarding Philip Weiss's report on a New York City gay bathhouse ("Postcard New York: Inside a Bathhouse," December 2): Will you also be doing an exposé on a heterosexual sex club? If so, will a gay reporter be writing it? I would be curious to see if he or she could duplicate the lurid and condescending tone of Mr. Weiss's article.

PAUL LERNER

New York, New York

To the editors:

Congratulations are in order to Philip Weiss, who succeeded in turning a male whorehouse into a sacred ashram.

MARK Y. HERRING

Bristol, Tennessee

HEMINGWAY'S WARS

To the editors:

Thirty years ago, in the pages of THE NEW REPUBLIC, I tried to prove my belief that R.W.B. Lewis's *The American Adam* was the work of a rather simpleminded fellow who did not even have a firm grasp on the facts of American literary history. In his references to me in his recent review of two new biographical studies of Hemingway ("Who's Papa?" December 2), Mr. Lewis reveals that he hasn't changed much.

Along with Edmund Wilson, I believe that stifled pangs and an undruggable disquiet lurk beneath the most innocent

surfaces in Hemingway's fiction. My quarrel with Wilson and all the other war-trauma interpreters of "Big Two-Hearted River" centers on fact that there is no mention of war in the story and that the letters that Hemingway wrote in the months after he was wounded at Fossalta di Piave not only express a tremendous excitement about what had happened to him, but betray no evidence of trauma. Through an analysis of certain ambiguous phrases in the story and through quotes from letters in which the young Hemingway indicated how caught up he was in a bitter fight with his mother after his return from the war, I proposed that the disquiet that the fisherman in the story was attempting to suppress had to do with a personal war, rather than with Fossalta. Although the argument seems to me quite simple, the unsubtle Mr. Lewis has clearly failed to grasp it.

As for Mr. Lewis's judgment that his friend Malcolm Cowley has annihilated my ideas about Hemingway by citing a letter that he, Cowley, received from the novelist many years after the First World War in which he spoke of its lastingly injurious effects on his body, mind, and spirit, let me say two things. First, when Hemingway in the early 1950s warned the young critic Charles Fenton to "think of poor old Cowley who has staked out my whole life of which he knows practically fuck-all nothing," he was not giving voice to a merely temporary feeling. Hemingway's contemptuous remarks about Cowley stretch all the way back to the first draft of "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," wherein he identified him as the "poet with a stupid look on his potato face." Second, Hemingway was, in his ex-wife Martha Gellhorn's words, "the biggest liar since Münchhausen," and the lies he told about himself in relation to the First World War rank among his most audacious.

I also wish to state that my allegedly sunny interpretation of "Big Two-Hearted River" is not a part of what Mr. Lewis calls "a larger intention" of proving that "American literature in general is and has been sun-drenched and happy." No one who has understood what I have written about Theodore Dreiser, Jack London, Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, the humorists of the Old Southwest,

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

JANUARY 20, 1986

PLANTING SEEDS OF FREEDOM

Democracy may be less a choice that societies make than the result of a very limited variety of circumstances and histories. If this is so, one consequence is that the number of democracies in the world, and their resilience, is not likely to increase greatly. Another consequence is that the longtime grievance against American foreign policy—that the U.S. reflexively allies itself with undemocratic regimes and movements in parts of the world not yet at home with modernity or constitutionalism—loses much of its moral force. For if arbitrary rule is the destiny of the billions of people born outside the ambit of John Locke, then the character of our ties to other states may be judged primarily by the standards of *realpolitik*.

Those who reject the standards of *realpolitik* as callous and counter-historical must have a theory of how the great transformation can take place from governments that disregard the rights and trample the liberties of their people to governments that respect them. How does it happen?

Before 1917 and since, it has been thought by many millions of militants, and by more timid folk too, that revolution would do the trick. But in most countries that have experienced revolution, the result has been the increasing immiseration of the populace and its submission to forms of domination that are often more brutal, and only occasionally more subtle. The spark ignited by Lenin in Russia 70 years ago, therefore, no longer glows so brightly. The fires that spread from it have consumed too many lives and too much hope. The moral cachet of revolution hasn't survived the conflagration, at least among people who have seen it up close. This is the meaning of Solidarity, and of Charta 77, and indeed of the whole incandescently non-violent underground in Central and Eastern Europe.

But from afar, the prospect of salvation by fire still has its enthusiasts. Thus the El Salvador guerrilla movement recently proclaimed itself to be what any astute observer already knew it was, a Marxist-Leninist vanguard. Given the bloody histories of such vanguards, this is uncommon fair warning. More often these days, the agrarian reformer disguise is not shed until the rebels sit in the seats of the mighty. By then it is too late; a democratic future is all but foreclosed.

Of course the struggle for democracy must still be waged against traditional privilege, as well as against the mesmerizing delusions of revolution. But democrats are always at a disadvantage when they compete with the ruthless. That is one reason why indigenous democratic forces are justified in expecting more than mere hand-wringing and moral support from mature democratic societies. They are entitled to concrete assistance. The United States succored the revival of democracy in postwar Europe and presided over its very creation in postwar Japan. Surely we should not be indifferent to the ordeal of struggling democrats around the world today.

The National Endowment for Democracy, a government-funded independent foundation, is an appropriate vehicle for solidarity with precisely such democrats who need help. It is an instrument of practical justice. The existence of NED does not preclude similar voluntary efforts by the vast networks of voluntary associations so characteristic of our democracy. What American churches are doing in South Africa is very similar to the mission envisioned by the legislation establishing the Endowment. But great public goals are never fulfilled solely by private action. Those who rightly criticize President Reagan's instinct to "privatize" every public purpose in the domestic arena seem worse than silly—and perhaps even insincere—when they argue that public solidarity with struggling democrats in the international arena should not be expressed in public acts or with public funds. Such abnegation would help only the dictatorships. The democrats of Spain and Portugal, once right-wing authoritarian regimes that are now full members of the brotherhood of democratic states, know just how important U.S. government assistance was in keeping them alive during the Franco and Salazar years. That assistance was directed to them by the CIA—yes, the CIA. And these were precisely the people who steered their countries away from the habits of fascism and the temptations of communism, into the constitutional mainstream of Western Europe. NED hopes that its support will sustain similar circles of democrats and their democratic activities in countries where the future has not yet been settled.

If you scrutinize any public or private bureaucracy, you are likely to find that it has made some mistakes. This is particularly so with a new agency. It turned out, for example, that the AFL-CIO's Free Trade Union Institute, using NED funds, has appropriated large sums to two French organizations, one of which has a shadowy history dating back to the *pièdes noirs* of French Algeria. Reasonable questions might be raised about why U.S. money should be spent in vibrantly democratic France at all; there are also reasonable justifications for doing so. In any case, these particular errors, if errors they were, resulted from the initial legislation that gave NED little direct control over the congressionally mandated appropriations to the FTUI. In the new legislation continuing NED funding, this structural flaw has been corrected. (The flaw that puts arms of the Democratic and Republican parties into the decision-making process has not been corrected.)

By focusing on the French cases, however, critics tried to put into question the entire enterprise. This is fair neither to FTUI nor to NED. A few idiosyncratic connections notwithstanding, the historic role of the American trade union movement in bolstering trade unionism and democratic values internationally—and especially in the Third World, where a special sensitivity to the peasant sensibility was required—is nothing less than exhilarating.

NED has been functioning for a bit more than two years. It has assisted democrats in the Communist world and those driven into exile from it. The proportion of funds expended in such work has been small. In fact, the great burden of its funded activities has been in the less developed countries where false clichés have the U.S. collaborating against social and political change. Here the very idea of pluralist institutions must seem like something of a dream. But encouraging the critical habits of the press or the adversary stance of lawyers is just the kind of encouragement these societies need if freedom is to have a chance. Often NED supports democratic developments in countries whose governments, hardly unfriendly to the U.S., would prefer not to see democracy developing at all. This is essential to NED's purpose. This is the case now in the Philippines, where fully ten percent of NED's money is going. It is also the case in Paraguay, Chile, South Africa, and other countries where it takes bravery to want social and political change. To match the bravery of the kind of people we should want to help, NED may have to be more daring than public agencies are prone to be.

In Guatemala, NED aid was critical in mobilizing the population for the recent election, which has given that country its first hope in decades of ending the reign of terror. The election won't guarantee that democracy will flourish. But it has emboldened vast numbers of people, across the rigid stratifications of a poor and frightened polity, to believe that there is another way to live.

Such emboldening is the absolute precondition for democratic change. Without NED, the U.S. has no way to embolden the hopeless except with empty rhetoric or with guns.

NOTEBOOK

□ THE AIRPORT BLOODBATHS in Rome and Vienna are a sickening throwback to the early years of this terrorist era. This has been a banner year for Palestinian activist butchery. The PLO is no longer "taking credit," as it used to say in its less devious days, for the massacre. It points to Abu Nidal, whom it calls its mortal enemy, but who in fact makes Yasir Arafat's life ironically easy. He does the dirty work while Arafat visits embassies and palaces and conferences. Many people seem to feel that if Arafat didn't give the order, he isn't responsible. In some sense, that is true. (Though the *Achille Lauro* affair suggests that it may take a little time before the matter of official PLO complicity becomes clear.) Still, the larger moral responsibility for atrocities like those in Rome and Vienna is *all* Yasir Arafat's. He was, and remains, the founding father of contemporary Palestinian violence. Abu Nidal may have revolted against the father, but he is a son nevertheless. The fact that Arafat cannot control the monster he created does not absolve him from its creation. If Israel acts against the PLO, it will be acting, therefore, against the heart of the problem. A more difficult problem is Syria. This "indispensable player," as the sanitizing policy experts like to say, has spent the past week provoking Israel with Soviet missiles and presiding over the activities of Abu Nidal, who lives in Syria. For too many, however, Hafez al-Assad's love fest with the king of Jordan suffices to obscure all that. Indeed, President Reagan and the State Department hope that Israel will not allow its anger to set back "the peace process." A fine sentiment. But what is the more vivid sign of the times in the Middle East—the "peace process" or the tagged and bloodied bodies at the Rome airport?

□ THE SLEAZEBALL WATCH: In 1976 a 16-year-old Pennsylvania boy named Mark Holtzman wrote an admiring letter to Ronald Reagan. By 1980 he was Reagan's Pennsylvania campaign manager. In 1984, at age 24, he made \$380,000 as a lobbyist-consultant. Thomas B. Edsall told Holtzman's story recently in the *Washington Post*. A company called Phoenix Associates, for example, which packages real estate developers' grant applications to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, paid Holtzman \$86,000. "I made some contacts for them," Holtzman explained. Holtzman is running for Congress, and such are the current standards of propriety that he actually presents his influence-peddling in speeches as a demonstration of the Republican values of grit and initiative. "I'm always trying to take maximum advantage of opportunities when they exist," he says.

□ AIRPORT '85: "If you feel you are paying too many taxes, the enclosed may be of interest to you," writes a self-described "account executive specializing in tax-advantaged investments" at a national brokerage firm, in a letter to potential investors. What it describes is a typical shelter—the kind of worthless transaction the House tax-

reform bill would curtail—but with a remarkable twist. The deal is to buy a share of a People Express airplane and then lease it back to the airline. People Express gets some cash; you get a six-dollar deduction in the first year for every dollar you invest. Nervous about owning an airplane? Here's the best part: it's "fully insured." In fact, the broker notes cheerily, you get "greater benefits if plane crashes!" We see the makings of a great Hitchcock movie in this one.

The Jesse Jackson of '88?

TEFLON TELEPREACHER

IN 1981 Pat Robertson faced ruin. His Christian Broadcasting Network was getting clobbered in the ratings race with secular stations. So Robertson began dumping most of his religious shows and replacing them with reruns of "Flipper," "The Rifleman," and "The Very Best of Groucho." He claims the ratings went up 50 percent. Today religious programming comprises only a quarter of CBN's lineup. Network officials insist that the changes don't compromise their spiritual mission. " 'The Rifleman' is about a single parent trying to raise a son in a hostile environment," explains Tim Robertson, Pat's son and CBN's programming chief, in *Channels of Communications*. "That's a very relevant problem for the 1980s."

Robertson is now deciding whether God, conservatism, and "Flipper" can carry him all the way to the 1988 Republican presidential convention and perhaps even the White House. He may surprise the many people who think a television evangelist can't possibly be taken seriously as a national candidate. His upbeat and unthreatening television persona scarcely resembles the stern reproachfulness of most video preachers. Relying on statistics more than scripture, he can articulately discuss a wide range of political issues, and he doesn't go out of his way to offend people. As Jerry Falwell notes, almost wistfully, in *On Cable*, "Pat Robertson is at least as political as I am, maybe more. But he is far more subtle."

Indeed, for political purposes, Robertson belongs less in the company of television evangelists like Falwell and Jimmy Swaggart than of marketing geniuses like Ronald Reagan. Like the president, Robertson knows how to make his extreme views palatable. He identifies himself not as an evangelist but as a law graduate, business executive, and television news anchorman. His politics are for the most part predictable. A hard-line anticommunist, he opposes sanctions against South Africa and supports the funding of "freedom fighters" in Nicaragua and elsewhere. On economic issues he surprises skeptical audiences with his impressive command of supply-side theory. He favors a flat tax and an immediate \$100 billion cut in federal spending, including a \$60 billion reduction in

defense procurement outlays. On social issues he pushes the usual package of school prayer, tuition tax credits, and antiabortion legislation.

Robertson pursues this agenda in Reagan-like fashion. In a September interview with the president, aired on CBN, Robertson confined his spiritual words to a parting blessing, focusing instead on the deficit, tax reform, protectionism, and the Geneva summit. In an address to the National Press Club in Washington on October 18, he offered a cogent analysis of the international debt crisis. Religion didn't come up until the question-and-answer session, when someone played into his hands by asking whether as president he might push the nuclear button in the hope that Jesus would return. Robertson chuckled, shook his head, and dismissed the suggestion. There they go again.

If he runs, Robertson will be only the second ordained clergyman ever to campaign seriously for the presidential nomination of a major party. In 1984 the Rev. Jesse Jackson drew 18 percent of the vote in the Democratic primaries. Could Robertson do better in the GOP? Conservative political operatives think so. They point to his telegenic speaking style, his ardent following, his considerable financial resources, and a constituency of social-issue conservatives frustrated by Reagan's failure to expend political capital on their behalf. But paradoxically, Robertson's success will depend on how successful he is at shedding the image of a TV preacher.

ROBERTSON has unusual and valuable assets for a potential presidential candidate. CBN, launched 26 years ago with a \$37,000 investment, is now a \$230-million-a-year business. CBN claims it is the fastest-growing network in the country. The centerpiece of CBN is "The 700 Club," a 90-minute news-talk-prayer show featuring Robertson as host. Inaugurated in 1963 with the aim of soliciting a pledge of ten dollars per month from each of 700 viewers, the program now boasts a regular audience estimated by Nielsen at 4.4 million people daily and 12.7 million weekly. CBN claims the dues-paying membership includes more than half a million people.

Early on Robertson recognized that the standard fire-and-brimstone harangues weren't the best way to reach a mass audience. Preferring, as he says, "to light a candle than curse the darkness" of the nihilistic television industry, he has learned to package his religious aura for maximum appeal. "We have a research department that tells us the harsh truth," he told the *Los Angeles Times*. "We determined that people weren't interested in religion or church, but they were interested in God's power." And Robertson has delivered. Rejecting comparisons to the pulpit-pounding broadcasts of Falwell and others, he points out that "there's nothing churchy" at CBN. Instead, Robertson offers viewers exactly what they want from a supreme being: strength, guidance, miraculous intervention, and the meaning of life. In 1984 he aired an hour-long prime-time special that sought to answer the six questions viewers said they would most like to ask God. According to Nielsen, the broadcast drew an audience of 28 million,

setting the 1984 record for religious broadcasting.

To be sure, Robertson relies on the staples of evangelical ministry. On "The 700 Club" Robertson and his two co-hosts have been known to immerse themselves in a supernatural trance in which they divine for the viewers what the Lord is doing for the sick and injured at that moment. Perhaps a fractured skull is being mended or a dislocated jaw is being repaired.

But in Robertson's theology, God does more than heal the stricken. "He can cause our plans to succeed," Robertson writes in his 1982 book, *The Secret Kingdom*. "He can cause people to like us. He can cause us to be preferred and chosen above others of equal talent." And the best way to secure God's favor is to plug into the CBN hot line. "The 700 Club" is often interrupted by in-house commercials warning of life's financial perils. Some ads advise the audience to enlist the aid of CBN's financial planning team, while others encourage viewers to buy a Robertson cassette titled "Knowing the Will of God."

Those seeking God's assistance are urged to call one of the 80 "700 Club" facilities offering prayer and counseling. The caller gets spiritual sustenance; the operator, if possible, gets the caller's name and address. By doing the Lord's work, CBN thus multiplies its already fruitful mailing list, and postal solicitations soon follow. CBN estimates it has received four million to five million phone calls during 1985, mostly from people seeking help with family problems.

Meanwhile, over the past four years Robertson has been nurturing a grass-roots network called the "Freedom Council," which claims to have enlisted 200,000 participants across the country. Members are asked to donate ten dollars a month and are encouraged to become active in local party organizations—usually Republican—for the purpose of bringing their religious views to bear on politics. The council's threefold program—"prayer, education, action"—reflects the sequence through which dormant Christians are to become voters and activists. Direct-mail experts such as Roger Craver and Stephen Winchell estimate that if he were to run in the 1988 primaries, Robertson could milk donor lists from "The 700 Club" and the Freedom Council for anywhere from \$12 million to \$20 million in contributions and federal matching funds. And he'd have little trouble converting many of his Freedom Council followers to Robertson campaign volunteers.

IF THIS sounds like the makings of a Norman Lear nightmare, it is. But there are serious problems with any scenario that has Robertson sweeping even the Christian right, much less the Republican Party. Robertson backers like to cite a survey conducted by pollster Lance Tarrance suggesting that a right-wing Christian candidate like Robertson would appeal to 30 percent of those planning to vote in the 1988 Republican primaries. But according to a 1983 study called *The Evangelical Voter*—perhaps the most thorough and discerning analysis of the Christian right—the monolithic conservative religious constituency is a myth. The book's authors, Stuart Rothenberg and Frank Newport, suggest that evangelical voters as a whole constitute

25 to 35 percent of the electorate, but that conservative fundamentalists make up only a quarter of this group.

And there's no guarantee that Robertson could even count on this subgroup as a voting bloc. A lot of fundamentalists don't take to Robertson's Pentecostal penchant for faith healing and speaking in tongues. Many of them regard televangelists in general with suspicion and disdain. And some of the religious right prefer to cast their lots with the front-runners. Falwell endorsed the 1988 Bush campaign two months before the 1984 election, and several officers of Christian Voice, a fundamentalist grass-roots and lobbying organization, have hinted that they would support Jack Kemp.

Robertson figures that despite the recent overtures of Kemp and Bush toward social-issue conservatives, his credibility with the Christian right is unrivaled; and he boasts that his likeness to Reagan could win over the rest of the Republican Party. Unlike his probable opponents, he doesn't need to affect the Reagan manner. He already thinks, speaks, and enthralls his audience in a manner strikingly reminiscent of the president's. "All I want to do is return 25 or 30 years back down the road," he says amiably, longing for the days before judicial intervention halted the rule of traditional values. New Right leader Paul Weyrich touts him as the heir to the Teflon presidency, noting that Robertson is "a nonthreatening figure who appears to deflect criticism, mainly because people trust him."

ROBERTSON is going to need plenty of that Teflon magic to survive in 1988. On camera he is unpretentious, even self-effacing. But when he loses his temper—as political novices often do—a streak of megalomania emerges. In 1981, when Norman Lear's People for the American Way successfully demanded equal airtime to counter an overtly political CBN broadcast, Robertson responded angrily in a letter to Lear: "You are not merely trying to silence a member of the press, you are trying to silence a prophet of God. . . . The suppression of the voice of God's servant is a terrible thing! God himself will fight for me against you—and He will win."

Robertson also has a history of unusual and often outrageous claims to supernatural communion. Negotiating to buy his first UHF station 27 years ago, he insisted on a sale price of \$37,000, explaining, "God said that was how much I was to pay." In *The Secret Kingdom* he relates another conversation in which the Lord offered further financial counsel. "I want you to buy the land," God allegedly told him, designating a 685-acre spread near Virginia Beach. "Buy it all." Sometimes, however, Robertson connects with the Holy Spirit not to seek administrative tips but to encourage miraculous divine interventions. Through prayer he claims to have diverted hurricanes from the Virginia Tidewater area, most recently Hurricane Gloria in late September.

And then there's his well-documented career in faith healing. A videotape of a 1981 conference shows him casting out the various afflictions of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship. "Several people are being healed of

hemorrhoids and varicose veins. Thank you, Lord," he exclaims. "In the center section here, somebody's just been healed of an ulcer." Robertson insists this isn't faith healing—it's just God answering prayer. But it is Robertson, not God, who thunders, "Satan be gone!"

Ultimately these excesses make Robertson easy prey for less colorful opponents and for a wryly incredulous me-

dia. His prospects for the presidential nomination may indeed be slim, but few question his role in helping to make the religious right a political force. At CBN, where skepticism is anathema and where Robertson runs the cameras, he will be in power for a long time to come.

WILLIAM SALETAN

'Human rights' groups with a double standard.

THE SANDINISTA LOBBY

BY FRED BARNES

LAST JULY 1 a man named Alvaro Jose Baldizon Aviles slipped across the border from Nicaragua into Honduras. He was no ordinary refugee. Baldizon was chief of the special investigations commission of Nicaragua's Ministry of Interior. He worked for Tomas Borge, the interior minister and a powerful figure in the Sandinista government. Baldizon had an eye-popping story to tell of massive human rights abuses by the Sandinistas. In September and October, under the guidance of the U.S. State Department, he told it all over Washington.

Citing specific names, dates, and locations, Baldizon disclosed hundreds of murders of peasants, prisoners, Indians, businessmen, and opponents of the Sandinista regime, all of them carried out by Nicaraguan government soldiers or police. Borge personally ordered some killings and whitewashed others, Baldizon said. In 1981 Borge allegedly standardized the practice of murdering political foes by issuing a secret order allowing "special measures," the euphemism for assassinations. He institutionalized the deception of visiting foreigners, appearing before Christian groups in an office with a crucifix, a statue of Jesus Christ, and a Bible. His real office is adorned with pictures of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, and copies of *The Communist Manifesto* and *Das Kapital*. Moreover, Borge was involved in cocaine trafficking, put former criminals in police jobs, and installed Cuban advisers in operational posts. Baldizon also said the Sandinistas were training Costa Rican guerrillas and using mobs of young Sandinistas to break up gatherings of political opponents.

Even by Latin American standards, this was quite an indictment, exactly the kind of firsthand account likely to trigger outrage by groups monitoring human rights in Central America. And maybe even spark an aggressive investigation or two. But not by the Washington Office on Latin America, which says it "monitors human rights practices and political developments in Central and South

America . . . [and promotes] a foreign policy that advances human rights, peace, and democracy in the hemisphere." Joseph T. Eldridge, the Methodist minister and former missionary in Chile who is WOLA's director, was invited along with other human rights activists to a session with Baldizon at the State Department on October 3. Eldridge didn't show. He did call to ask about a private session with Baldizon, and State Department officials agreed so long as one of their staff aides was present. Later, Eldridge canceled the meeting because of a schedule conflict. He insists he's still trying to meet with Baldizon. But Janice Barbieri of the State Department's office of public diplomacy says Eldridge isn't trying very hard; he hasn't even called back to set up a new time. Whatever the case, it's been months, and Eldridge has yet to meet with Baldizon.

This indifference to Baldizon and his evidence of systematic abuses of human rights was not a lapse. On the contrary, it reflects the selective moral indignation of a phalanx of organizations in Washington that regularly criticizes the Reagan administration's policy toward Central America and, in particular, Nicaragua. The ostensible aims of these groups are high-minded: peace, protection of human rights, free elections, an end to domination of politics by oligarchies, etc. And they tirelessly point out how Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Panama—all allies of the United States—come up short. But Nicaragua, with its increasingly repressive Sandinista regime, is another story. What criticism these organizations have of Nicaragua is soft-hitting in the extreme. Mostly they explain away or ignore abuses by the Sandinistas.

These organizations and their leaders refer to themselves as "the community." But they've been accused of being something quite different. A Heritage Foundation paper labeled them "The Left's Latin American Lobby." A book by the Council for Inter-American Security attacks them as "The Revolution Lobby." Bruce Cameron, a for-

mer lobbyist for Americans for Democratic Action, says WOLA at least is a "shill for the Sandinistas." Naturally, WOLA and other groups disagree. "There is an attitude in [Washington] that equates opposition to the administration's Central American policy with support for the Sandinista government," says Eldridge. "This is an unfortunate and lamentable conclusion."

MAYBE SO, but WOLA and other organizations haven't exactly gone out of their way to show that they don't apply a double standard—tough on right-wing governments and U.S. allies, soft on left-wing regimes. A good place to start would have been with Baldizon. Juan Mendez of America's Watch, a human rights monitoring group, went to the trouble of taking Baldizon to lunch, where they could confer without State Department interference. But America's Watch seems more interested in countering Reagan's attacks on Nicaragua than checking out Baldizon's evidence. Last July it put out a report evaluating Nicaragua's human rights record. The logical yardstick was the Sandinista promise of political pluralism and a mixed economy. Had the Sandinistas delivered on these? But that wasn't the question asked. Rather, America's Watch found the one human rights standard that the Sandinistas can meet: Is their human rights record as bad as Reagan says? Nope, America's Watch concluded.

WOLA doesn't pretend to be anything but an advocacy organization. It advocates friendly, tolerant relations with Nicaragua. But similar questions arise in the case of legal groups, whose nominal concern is not policy but the rule of law. Susan Benda of the American Civil Liberties Union says her only concern is blocking U.S. involvement in the covert war waged by the *contras*. "We're opposed to this covert war regardless of what the Sandinistas do," she says. "We don't care if they close down the press. What the Sandinistas do doesn't affect our opinion on the war."

But at least one legal group is now taking care to avoid the appearance of a double standard. Amy Young, the director of the International Human Rights Law Group, now admits that her organization's study of *contra* abuses last year should also have looked at Sandinista conduct. In a new investigation early in 1986—another vote on *contra* aid comes in March—both sides will be examined, she says. Larry Garber, IHRLG's project director, characterizes the soft-on-the-Sandinistas approach of some groups as "avoidance tactics." Although they recognize there are human rights problems in Nicaragua, "they won't go down and investigate," he says. Why not? "It's no secret some organizations in town were excited about what happened in Nicaragua and are still hopeful it will be a revolution that brings lasting peace and stability. They've been willing to forgive things that have gone on during a time of transition. That time is over."

Practically no one is more forgiving than the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy, the umbrella group of "the community." Its 50-odd members include WOLA, the Council on Hemispheric Affairs, the Washington office of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the American

Friends Service Committee, and the YWCA. The coalition, along with the Commission on U.S.-Central American Relations, published what it called a "basic information" book on Central America. According to the book, the Sandinistas have done little wrong, and when they have, it was only because the United States forced them to.

Take the massive Sandinista arms buildup. It began in 1979, at a time when the U.S. government was reasonably friendly, and has gone on unabated. Nicaragua now has by far the largest military force in Central America. Yet the "basic information" book attributes the Sandinista buildup to fear of a U.S. invasion. "In short, the Nicaraguans want to raise the military, and thereby the political, cost of a U.S.-sponsored invasion," it says. Nor do the Nicaraguans threaten their neighbors. "Despite the difficulty in distinguishing between offensive and defensive weapons, it is clear that the military strengthening that Nicaragua has undergone in the last few years is primarily defensive, not offensive." Even MIGs from the Soviets, the book says, wouldn't give Nicaragua "a credible offensive force capable of invading any country in the region."

The book is vague about the political leanings of the Sandinista directorate, vague in a way that misleads. Borge, the interior minister, is described as "a poet and a writer [who] has studied law at the National University." This is the fellow who confided to *Playboy* magazine in 1983: "I told [my mother] that I would not be blackmailed by her gentleness and her naivete and that I was a Communist." Humberto Ortega, the defense minister and brother of Nicaraguan president Daniel Ortega, is described simply as an author. Yet Ortega doesn't mince words about his ideology. "Marxism-Leninism is the scientific doctrine that guides our revolution," he said in 1981. "Our moral strength is Sandinismo and our doctrine is that of Marxism-Leninism."

As the Sandinistas are legitimized by "the community," the *contras* are demonized. Dissenting opinions are not tolerated on this point. When Bruce Cameron decided that support for the *contras* would promote human rights in Nicaragua, he was no longer welcome in "the community."

THE acceptable line on the *contras* is that they are old Somoza hands who have generated no popular support for their insurgency. "Nicaraguans," wrote Reggie Norton of WOLA in the coalition's book, "are justifiably concerned that far from representing a promise to improve their lives, the *contras* represent a return to the type of repression that characterized the Somoza regime." This may have been true five years ago, but since then the *contras* have been transformed from a small band of ex-National Guardsmen to a 15,000-man force that has won the support of such anti-Somoza leaders as Alfonso Robelo and Arturo Cruz. Mass defections to the *contras*, plus their ability to operate in large areas of Nicaragua, are palpable signs of a surge in popularity, and evidence of growing disenchantment with the Sandinistas.

On the subject of elections, Eldridge of WOLA talks

scornfully about the recent election in Guatemala, which saw a once-exiled dissident win the presidency. After all, Eldridge says, "elections are one note in the symphony of democracy. . . . The gist is it [the Guatemalan election] was technically flawless. Hats off. The question is whether this will wean the military away from its monopoly of power. A lot of people are skeptical." But the Nicaraguan election in 1984 was "a political opening," concluded a report by WOLA and IHRIG. Serious impediments to free choice by the voters were minimized in the report. There was censorship, but the parties were permitted "to communicate to the Nicaraguan people" their "vision for the future" and "to criticize freely the performance of the government." Repeated "incidents of harassment and intimidation" occurred—Sandinista mobs broke up opposition rallies—but they didn't affect much. The chief opposition party, the Coordinator, which dropped out charging that the election wasn't free or fair, acted for "political reasons."

ELDRIDGE SAYS that half the leaders of the Coordinator would rather have an invasion by U.S. Marines than participate in an election. If so, then why did the Coordinator accept the Sandinista condition that the *contras* be asked to lay down their arms for the election? In fact, the Coordinator's candidate, Arturo Cruz, negotiated feverishly for a postponed election in which the opposition would take part. At the key moment, though, the Sandinistas backed out.

The Sandinista sympathizers continue to insist that political pluralism is the general rule in Nicaragua. America's Watch proclaimed in July 1985 that "while prior censorship has been imposed by emergency legislation, debate on major social and political questions is robust, outspoken, even often strident" in Nicaragua. In fact, just as under Somoza's regime, debate is allowed only so long as it doesn't threaten the authorities.

The America's Watch report claims that the group does "not take a position on the U.S. geopolitical strategy in Central America," then goes on to do exactly that. There have been abuses of human rights by the Sandinistas, it says, but "some notable reductions in abuses have occurred in Nicaragua since 1982, despite the pressure caused by escalating external attacks." This is exactly what the Sandinistas say. Baldizon, who was in a position to know, tells a strikingly different story. So do Protestant preachers who have been arrested recently in Nicaragua. And last October the Sandinistas suspended what few civil liberties had been allowed.

One organization that has gone to great lengths to explain away this new state of emergency is the Central American Historical Institute at Georgetown University. Tossing out civil liberties "does not violate the U.N. International Civil and Political Rights Amendment," the institute said in 1984. And the state of emergency doesn't take away the right to life or justify torture or slavery, or block "freedom of thought, conscience, or religion," the institute said. "Nor is it applied in a discriminatory fashion," it added, suggesting that political

repression is less troubling if it is evenhanded.

The institute points out the impressive turnout of 75 percent for the election, despite efforts by the Coordinator to discourage voting. "This, and the fact that opposition parties won one-third of the valid votes, contradicts the accusation that the election was merely a rubber stamp for the [Sandinistas]." Last May, in its publication *Update*, the institute went to great lengths to knock down an article in *La Prensa*, the frequently censored opposition paper in Nicaragua. Jaime Chamorro, the paper's codirector, charged that the Sandinistas added 400,000 votes to their tally. The same month the institute said in another *Update* that opposition parties are alive and "kicking" in Nicaragua's National Assembly. The Sandinistas like "a give and take dynamic to prevail so as to not alienate what amounts to a 'loyal' opposition."

The institute frequently attacks the *contras*, but is squeamish about Sandinista abuses. In a rundown of *contra* leaders, it lists Lucia Cardenal de Salazar as "widow of Jorge Salazar, wealthy coffee grower killed in a November 1980 dispute with Nicaraguan police." Shirley Christian of the *New York Times* reports in her book *Nicaragua* that Jorge Salazar was assassinated by Sandinista security forces. Baldizon confirmed that Sandinista leaders were involved in plotting and carrying out Salazar's death.

THE BIGGEST splash made by "the community" has been with its well-timed reports of *contra* abuses. The most famous of these was written by Reed Brody, a New York lawyer. He charged that the *contras* attack purely civilian targets, and he cited instances of killings of unarmed women and children, rapes, beatings, kidnappings, forced recruitment of new troops, disruption of harvests, and intimidation of people joining government programs. With a congressional vote on aid to the *contras* a few weeks away last spring, the Brody report got big play in the press. But it was, at best, open to question. A Reagan administration examination of the report found that six incidents cited by Brody had been carried out by a *contra* officer later executed for murdering civilians and that four incidents occurred before the *contras* were constituted as an organized force. Brody blames the *contras* for killing a French doctor with mortar fire, but the *contras* say they had no mortars in that incident and that Sandinista fire killed him. Moreover, the administration says 48 rifles and 11,500 rounds of ammunition were seized from what Brody describes as merely a farm, and that a "deeply religious" couple killed by *contras* were actually agents of Sandinista state security. Brody was candid enough to disclose that the idea for the report came from Reichler & Applebaum, the Washington law firm that represents the Nicaraguan government. And he also revealed that in Nicaragua he was housed and given office space by the Sandinistas. The government even directed him to witnesses. Still, Brody said, his investigation was "independent." He made no attempt to probe Sandinista abuses.

A recent Sandinista defector has described Brody's close relationship with the Nicaraguan government. Mario Jose

Guerrero was director of the National Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. The commission, Guerrero said, was ordered to give full support to Brody. Besides office and lodging, it paid all his bills and arranged interviews. Another defector, Bayardo de Jesus Payan, was the chief budget officer of the commission. He described Brody in action to a House subcommittee:

I . . . noticed that many times he showed a photograph in which he was hugging Commander Daniel Ortega and also that he was constantly calling on the telephone to the foreign ministry and visiting it. He also made propaganda for the [Sandinistas] and urged the employees of the institution to vote for Daniel Ortega, since he was a great supporter of the Sandinistas. Also, he always spoke badly about the policy of the government of the United States and of President Ronald Reagan.

WOLA and the International Human Rights Law Group found Brody's evidence compelling, but they were worried that his connection with the Sandinistas would deprive the report of credibility. They dispatched two lawyers, one an outspoken critic of administration policy, to Nicaragua to check on *contra* abuses. These representatives also neglected to examine abuses by the Nicaraguan government. But they managed to corroborate some of the

Brody report, and they declared their support for it. America's Watch supplied a report of its own, which dealt with both sides. It concluded that Sandinista abuses were mainly in 1981 and 1982, and directed against the Miskito Indians. Since then, there had been a "sharp decline" in Sandinista abuses, America's Watch said. Baldizon, for one, would quarrel with that.

"The community" does make some efforts to demonstrate evenhandedness. WOLA, Eldridge says, has been "steadfastly encouraging dialogue in Nicaragua, as in El Salvador." Indeed, WOLA sponsored a visit to the United States by leaders of El Salvador's guerrilla forces. But the *contra* leaders in Nicaragua are out of bounds. Eldridge is for a dialogue between Duarte and his Communist opposition, but not for one between the Sandinistas and the *contras*. The dialogue he wants would pit only the erratic Eden Pastora, once a Sandinista commander, and perhaps Arturo Cruz against the Sandinistas. Cruz could be there only as an individual, not as a leader of the *contras*, says Eldridge. Which means that the main political and military opposition to the Sandinistas would be excluded, and the Sandinistas be under little pressure in the talks to make concessions to democracy. Some dialogue.

Vultures, fat cats, and the rest of us.

THE TRUTH ABOUT CORPORATE RAIDERS

BY ROBERT KUTTNER

NOT LONG AGO, the corporate raiders Irwin Jacobs and T. Boone Pickens addressed an overflow crowd of Harvard Business School students. Pickens and Jacobs make their livings borrowing money and attempting to seize control of corporations, or cashing in their shares for a fast profit once they have set off a bidding war. Pickens made \$89 million for failing to take over Phillips Petroleum. The B-school kids were about as euphoric as people who study balance sheets ever get. The mood was more like a rock concert than a financial seminar. You almost expected Pickens to perform an act of arbitrage right there on stage, to wild applause.

Judging by the eager reception, raiders present a splendid role model for the business student of the 1980s. They offer a much faster career track than the tamer brands of management, entrepreneurship, and bond-peddling. Intriguingly, they also serve as the business school version of populists. For, according to Pickens and his many admirers in the academy, the financial press, and the brokerage houses, raiders are the invisible hand incarnate.

They embody the democratic virtue of enhancing corporate accountability, the capitalist virtue of maximizing value for shareholders, and the social virtue of forcing the redeployment of assets on reluctant corporate managers. Thus the raider offers not only fame and fortune, but the commodity most highly prized by capitalists ever since the Protestant reformation: virtue itself.

Is corporate raiding truly so virtuous? There is the semblance of a debate about that, but the debate is oddly muted. After all, the raiders' adversaries, in the short run, are incumbent corporate management. As *Newsweek's* Robert Samuelson wrote in a representative column lauding Pickens, "Can you imagine a group less deserving of help? I can't."

Indeed. Introducing Jacobs and Pickens to Harvard, the attorney Ira Millstein intoned: "The alternatives are these: Do we wish to tilt the playing field to the managers? Or to the raiders?" When the issue is posed that way, as it normally is, one is tempted to shrug: a plague on both their houses.

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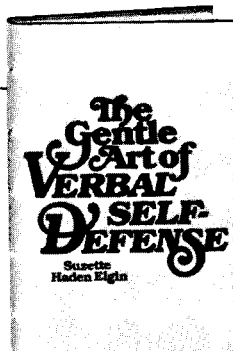
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About the Author

Psycholinguist Suzette Haden Elgin has presented her innovative self-defense principles in a variety of formats. She has given workshops and seminars all over the U.S., including verbal self-defense sessions for doctors, lawyers, and other professionals. Dr. Elgin has also created a self-defense tape and a training manual for people who teach her self-defense techniques.



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The trouble is that the question is far too narrow, and it begs several other questions: What is the nature of a corporation? Who are its constituents, other than managers and shareholders? What is the best way of making corporations accountable to their various constituencies? What should society expect in return for the many legal privileges and immunities conferred on corporations? What sort of regime of corporate control maximizes the long-term goals of productivity growth and fair distribution of rewards for the whole economy? These questions, in turn, raise other chestnuts of economic theory: What is the relationship of individual utility to social utility? And what should society do when auction markets fail to produce the best of all possible worlds?

Pickens is only the most swashbuckling player in the takeover casino. The more usual hostile takeover occurs when one large corporation, such as GAF, offers to buy the shares of another large corporation, such as Union Carbide, at a premium price, over the objections of the incumbent board and managers, who will doubtless lose their jobs. A reverse variation, lately in vogue, is the management buy-out, in which incumbent management adopts the same maneuver, preemptively. In almost all cases, raiders use borrowed money.

The takeover game is accelerating for several reasons. First, the current regulatory climate is exceptionally lax. In more normal times, many fashionable takeover techniques might be prohibited as inherently manipulative. But in the laissez-faire 1980s, no regulator is disposed to interfere with the presumed genius of the market. Second, tender offers produce great short-run gains for people who trade stocks. Any time a bidding war for a publicly traded firm breaks out, current stockholders in that firm can look forward to quick windfall gains when they tender their shares to the raider. The more raiding, the more run-ups. Third, recent changes in tax law provide large subsidies for takeovers that employ borrowed money. Interest on the new debt is tax-deductible, of course. More important, the new owner may take the huge accelerated depreciation write-offs that were instituted in President Reagan's 1981 tax cut, and may do so based on the new high value of the corporation's assets set by the buyer's own purchase

price. This means that almost any corporation that hasn't traded hands since 1981 is worth more to potential buyers than to its current owners.

Finally, the middlemen making the immense profits on the transactions—lawyers, investment bankers, institutional investors—are people of substantial political influence. They like coherent ground rules, but above all they want the game to continue. To the extent that the SEC has been involved at all, it has acted to expedite the game, in line with the prevailing theory that shareholders benefit.

There is nothing new about shrewd middlemen netting windfall profits from purely financial or speculative rearrangements of assets. The previous peak of financial innovation in the service of speculative borrowing, ominously enough, was in the late 1920s. Critics dating back to Veblen have long called attention to the difference between entrepreneurs whose bag of tricks is purely "financial" and those who create real economic wealth. "Speculators," wrote Keynes, "may do no harm as bubbles on a steady stream of enterprise. But the position is serious when enterprise becomes the bubble on a whirlpool of speculation."

What is truly new about the current wave of speculative takeovers is the widespread approbation. The raiding phenomenon occurs at a historical moment when resurgent laissez-faire dominates philosophical



DRAWING BY ALLEN CARROLL FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

assumptions. The widespread approval of hostile takeovers reflects the philosophical triumph of the "Chicago" school of economics, whose worldview is predicated on the assumption that markets must know what they are doing. Nearly all the economists weighing hostile takeovers sound like Chicago economists. Even the proposed remedies for abuses are almost entirely market remedies. In the Chicago view, the only test that is really necessary is whether the raiding game boosts share prices.

The 1985 *Economic Report of the President* includes an entire chapter defending hostile takeovers. The chapter is pure Chicago economic theory, right down to its title, "The Market for Corporate Control," which is borrowed from a famous article of two decades ago by Professor Henry Manne, who argued that corporate takeover battles should be understood as markets no different from other markets. Manne and his disciples contend that whole cor-

porations are simply commodities, "like apples." The management team that can command the highest price is, by definition, the highest-valued team, and hence deserves to win.

In the story told by the *Economic Report of the President*, hostile takeovers, no matter how implausible or disruptive, are therefore an unmitigated good. The proof of this is simply that takeover battles increase the price paid to shareholders of the target company, which must mean that the takeover team will wring more performance out of the assets than the old managers. Otherwise, the report argues, it would have been irrational for the raider to pay a premium. Raiders, therefore, increase society's real wealth. So valuable is this service that the middleman rake-off by investment bankers and lawyers pales into insignificance. In fact, says the report, the only real abuses are management's defensive tactics, which serve management's own interests at the expense of the shareholders.

THE REPORT READS very much like a term paper in a University of Chicago economics class; and it suggests that the debate about the social benefit of hostile takeovers is really two debates—one about the appropriate regulatory framework for corporate ownership and control, the other about how to think about economics. For the Chicago school, which has dominated this debate, there is one simple answer to all economic questions: the more nearly all economic life resembles an auction, the more efficient and hence socially superior it is. If corporations are perpetually on the block, any dislocation, insecurity, middleman windfall, or speculative overreaching is outweighed by the prospect that assets are being redeployed to their highest and best use. The apotheosis of this view is the work of Michael Jensen, a financial economist and takeover advocate, who wrote in a recent issue of *Harvard Business Review*, "The takeover market provides a unique, powerful, and impersonal mechanism to accomplish the major restructuring and redeployment of assets required by changes in technology and consumer preference. . . . Scientific evidence indicates that activities in the market for corporate control almost uniformly increase efficiency and shareholders' wealth."

Jensen's scientific evidence boils down to the fact that raiders bid up stock values of target companies (by an average of about 30 percent). This, of course, must be true by definition; nobody would tender shares to a raider who merely matched the market price. Jensen goes on to argue that raiders are prepared to pay premiums because they must be able to produce some "synergy" that the prior managers had failed to exploit. (In Chicago-babble, "must be" is the preferred verb form.) Even if a bidder buys a company only to sell off its assets, this is also a social good, because the assets ultimately wind up in the hands of someone better able to exploit them. Jensen also contends that when an acquiring corporation goes deeply into debt in order to buy a target company, leaving the newly combined firm with a substantial debt that can be three or four times its total equity, this sort of "leveraging up" is also a

good thing, because the burden of meeting payments forces executives to work harder.

Jensen even likes "golden parachutes"—the multimillion-dollar consolation prizes paid to executives who lose out in takeovers. He argues that they remove one source of opposition to a more fluid market in corporate control.

IS THIS PICTURE TRUE, or only convenient? Is maximization of shareholder value in the short run the only test of economic worth? Share prices, after all, were soaring in mid-1929, but this didn't necessarily reflect an underlying healthy economy. Is the hostile takeover the only way, or the best way, of redeploying physical and human capital, and of keeping managers disciplined? Are takeover battles the most efficient form of the "creative destruction" that Schumpeter said was a crucial element of capitalism?

Evidence is beginning to accumulate that the easy speculative takeovers of the 1980s have substantial negative effects on particular firms and on the economy as a whole. The evidence is messy, anecdotal, and institutional; it lacks the conceptual neatness (and the political constituency) of the Chicago view. But it seems to discredit both the takeover game and the financial economists' view of the corporate arena as nothing but an auction.

One effect of takeovers is accelerating debt. In the aggregate, the "leveraged buy-out" boom is one more realm where the American economy is sailing forward on an ocean of speculative borrowing. According to the New York Stock Exchange, \$89 billion in corporate equity was converted into debt last year. The debt-equity ratio of U.S. corporations has increased from 57 percent in 1961 to more than 81 percent in 1984, and eight points of that increase occurred in just the last year. Debt is fine in a rising market when real interest rates are falling. But how will these over-leveraged companies perform in the next recession?

Beyond the problem of excessive borrowing, one also must consider what the casino mentality does to the entire corporate culture. In a world where whole corporations are prey, the manager who plans for the long term is a sucker. Raiders posing as populists neatly appropriate the widespread criticism of managers as myopic oafs worried only about this quarter's earnings. But for managers, takeover fears only intensify the obsession with the quarterly bottom line. For when reported profits drop, the stock may become undervalued, making it an easier target. Takeover worries also lead prudent managers to get rid of cash cushions, to raid pension funds, and to throw overboard anything that might make them a target. Often managers deliberately turn a swan back into an ugly duckling in order to make the firm less attractive to a potential raider. In cases like CBS's successful defense against Ted Turner, or Walt Disney's defense against Saul Steinberg, the target firm ends up uglifying itself by selling off some of its most profitable divisions, or taking on crippling debt, which depresses its own earnings for years to come.

The claim that target firms are poorly managed underperformers is not borne out by the facts. A study by Pro-

fessor Louis Lowenstein of the Columbia University Law School looked at all of the industrial firms that were targets of hostile takeovers during 1981. He found that they enjoyed a return on equity of 16 percent—well above average. This finding only reflects common sense. Raiders are after good firms that happen to have depressed stock prices; they are not interested in paying premium prices for lemons.

There is also increasing evidence that many shotgun mergers turn out to be bad deals. The synergy fails to materialize. The acquiring firm discovers that it overpaid, and later sells off the assets of the target firm, often for a loss. There is a long catalog of cases in which the acquiring firm, understandably, knew less about what it was buying than the established management, and proved to be an even worse manager.

The proof that raiders often overpay is that the parent firm's own stock subsequently declines. Several recent studies reveal that hostile takeovers indeed bid up the price of the target firm (as they would have to), but over time they tended to depress the performance of the raiding firm. A study by Professor Frederick Scherer of Swarthmore College found that target companies had nearly double the average rate of profitability, pre-merger, but a sharp decline, post-merger.

Another intriguing phenomenon that gives the lie to the Chicago interpretation of the efficiency of hostile takeovers is the latest fad, the management buy-out. Managers have found that two can play this game. The same device available to raiders—borrowing money and buying stock—is available to managers. Lately many managers have preemptively taken their companies private, using the same sort of junk-bond financing as raiders. Now, obviously if the social justification for an unfriendly takeover is the claim that incumbent management was doing a poor job, the same claim cannot possibly apply when that same incumbent management buys out the shareholders. On the contrary, there is a pretty fair presumption that if management is taking advantage of its privileged information to buy out undervalued stock, then it is violating its fiduciary duty to its own shareholders. And there is some evidence that a management preparing to go private can subtly act to drive down the stock price—for example, by overfunding its pension plan to depress quarterly earnings—in order to buy the stock back at a bargain later on. When management swoops in to buy the company, the invisible hand at work is that of Alex Portnoy, not Adam Smith.

Setting aside assumptions and getting down to cases, often the only factor that makes the deal pay at all is the tax angle. In his study of management buy-outs, Professor Lowenstein found that without the tax subsidy the return on equity in a sample of 28 management buy-outs would have been a paltry six percent.

HOSTILE TAKEOVERS, in sum, do produce gains for three kinds of people—stockholders who happen to hold shares in a target company on the eve of a bidding war; middlemen (investment bankers and lawyers made

\$100 million in the Pantry Pride takeover of Revlon); and executives looking to increase their own status. But contrary to the Chicago view of financial markets, they don't automatically translate into gains to the national welfare. Here we have a double case of market failure. The first market failure is a familiar theorem, one that won the Nobel Prize in economics for Professor Herbert Simon: the self-interest of a corporate executive should not be mistaken for the self-interest of the company. Executives are notorious empire builders, and there is no quicker road to empire than a big merger.

The second kind of market failure is even more fundamental. It is the failure of the stock market to accurately reflect the true "worth" of a given firm on a given day. The main characteristic of the stock market is that it fluctuates. Studies show that the fluctuations in share prices vastly overstate actual variations in a firm's profitability.

The stock market, by its very nature, is a traders' market, where prices reflect the expectation traders impute to other traders as much as they reflect the real value of the underlying corporate assets. Often the total value of a firm's shares is substantially less than its liquidation value, or the price it would fetch in a negotiated sale. But that is no proof that the present managers are inferior to the raiders. The shares may be depressed for any number of reasons, ranging from lack of consumer confidence about the economy as a whole to current high interest rates pulling money into the bond market, to investor pessimism about a particular industry. Oil companies were takeover targets because the stock market valued their shares at a price that translated to about three dollars a barrel. Yet often, because of the vagaries of the takeover game, a very badly managed company, such as Texaco, winds up taking control of a well-managed firm, such as Getty. If the legal rules that make possible an orderly corporate and financial marketplace suddenly provide that any firm with undervalued shares is up for grabs whenever a prospective raider can borrow enough money, then the entire real economy is turned into a speculative casino, in which rearranging assets yields greater rewards than building them.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE about all this? If you buy the Chicago/Reagan administration view, nothing should be done. But even if the evidence troubles you, the remedy remains elusive. The reform proposals currently under debate fall into two categories—pro-raider and pro-manager, exactly the formulation Attorney Millstein began with. This is hardly surprising, because raiders and managers are the ones with seats at the political table. There is no Productivity PAC lobbying Congress and the SEC.

If you think that corporate management needs more security, then there are devices that can frustrate raiding. You can require that the boards of directors of both the target firm and the acquiring firm approve any tender offer. You can prohibit "two-tier" tender offers, in which a raider purposely induces a stampede by offering a better price to the first shareholders who tender their stock than

to the rest. You can amend the Williams Act of 1968, which regulates tender offers, by lengthening the time the offer must be open. You can also provide that any short-run profit a raider makes from his stock holdings must be returned to the company.

On the other hand, if you think that raiding exemplifies the invisible hand, you can lubricate the takeover market in various ways. You can make management buy-outs more difficult. You can prohibit golden parachutes, non-voting stock gimmicks, preferential sell-offs to "white knights," and other brands of "shark repellent" now in vogue. Unocal managed to fight off Boone Pickens by buying its own shares in a "self-tender" that excluded Pickens from the offer. Chicagoans think this should be illegal.

THE BEST REGULATION currently on the table is the one recently proposed by the Federal Reserve Board, which wants to extend its "margin" requirements to corporate takeovers. These rules limit how much you can borrow to buy corporate stock. It is a little odd that if you want to speculate in 100 shares of IBM, you must put up 50 percent of your own funds, but if you want to borrow all of the money necessary to take over the entire company, no problem. Extending margin requirements would keep managers under the threat of tender offers, but damp down the excessive leverage, and thereby also take away some of the tax advantages. However, the Federal Reserve Board of Governors split three-to-two on this plan, and two new Reagan appointees will soon create an administration majority on the Fed. The administration released comments Christmas week opposing the Fed's margin proposal.

Even the best remedies now on the table beg the larger question of what we expect from corporations, and how they should be governed. The cure for T. Boone Pickens is not greater security for corporate managers, just as the remedy for lazy entrenched management is not necessarily Pickens.

Since the classic 1932 work of Adolf Berle and Gardner Means, *The Modern Corporation and Private Property*, it has been widely recognized that a big corporation seldom reflects its storybook structure of share-holding owners who monitor, hire, and fire salaried executives and boards of directors. Control, as the saying goes, is separated from ownership. In practice, most corporations are run by managers and by passive, self-selecting boards of directors. The lack of corporate accountability to shareholders—and, by extension, to society—has troubled generations of reformers. Critics in the mode of Ralph Nader have proposed to democratize the corporation by increasing the power of its outside (nonmanagement) directors, and its shareholders. Against this history, the hostile takeover is the Chicago version of social revolution; it deftly outflanks the progressive critics with a radically classic version of shareholder democracy, and without recourse to government regulation.

But the Chicago remedy is a mite too radical, for it ignores the fact that corporations are not just fluid collec-

tions of assets, but sets of relationships. Moreover, "the market" that exists in the real world is not a grand casino, but a set of legal rules and social norms that makes practical capitalism possible. Without conventions like money, bankruptcy, legally enforceable contracts, federally sanctioned and regulated banks and stock markets, there would be no marketplace. And once you admit that these markets depend on society's rules, it becomes legitimate to discuss variations on those rules. The market is often virtuous, but in a civil polity it can never be the sole virtue or the sole standard of virtue.

In the Chicago view, any private transaction, such as a contract or the sale of shares, is presumed to be voluntary, while any public intervention is presumed to be coercive. But that assumption, when you get down to cases, is often nonsensical. A worker with 20 years on the job and ties to the community is hardly a free contracting party with power equal to his employer's. By the same token, a pension fund, confronted with a take-it-or-leave-it tender offer, is not free to sell or not sell. Private transactions can be intensely coercive; and public regulation can lessen coercion, and hence increase choice.

Everybody wants a competitive marketplace, but there are better ways of stimulating competition than by putting entire corporations on a perennial auction block. Surely it is healthier for corporations to compete in the usual way—on the basis of the quality and price of their products and services, on the price their shares command in the financial marketplace—than by chronically threatening to acquire each other. If we had more product competition and price competition, we wouldn't have to rely on the threat of takeovers to allocate resources efficiently.

In Germany and Japan, the two industrial economies with the highest long-term productivity growth, hostile takeovers simply don't exist. The control of the corporation is not subject to an auction, yet product competition and innovation are fierce. Interestingly too, German industry and Japanese industry are much more highly leveraged than ours. They rely heavily on debt financing, yet in an institutionally stable context where the debt goes for investment in new technology, not for takeover wars.

THE THREAT of takeovers is a very poor version of shareholder democracy. In the Chicago model, the only corporate citizens who need to be served are shareholders, who change overnight as investors trade shares. But in the real world, workers and managers and the communities where they live have some long-term stake in the viability of an enterprise. Real corporate democracy would place managers under more scrutiny from outside directors, and would include some participatory rights for employees. It is more than a little ironic that the latest device for sheltering a corporation from raiders is to give a large block of stock to the one group unlikely to sell capriciously—the workers. Boone Pickens may be performing a service for genuine corporate democracy after all: he may force the corporations to pay more attention to their most loyal constituency, their own employees. □

THE PRINCE AND THE PREPPY

BY MICHAEL MASSING

IT'S APRIL IN BERMUDA, and the Southampton Princess Hotel is filled with institutional investors, portfolio managers, executives from Chrysler, Martin Marietta, and a dozen other corporations. Each has paid \$2,500 for four days of sun, sand, and off-the-record sessions with economic policymakers from Washington. Representative Jack Kemp and Senator Bill Bradley are on hand, plus top officials from the Treasury Department and the Federal Reserve. And, in the thick of it all, are the organizers of this gala affair, Rowland Evans and Robert Novak.

Evans and Novak have been together for almost 23 years now, but never have they been so prominent. The Bermuda conference was but one of many political forums they have staged in the last few years, starring the likes of Treasury Secretary James Baker, White House Chief of Staff Donald Regan, Walter Mondale, and Senator Robert Dole. Every week they host a half-hour interview program on Cable News Network, with guests ranging from Jerry Falwell to Geraldine Ferraro. They also contribute two CNN commentaries a week. Novak is a regular on "The McLaughlin Group," the televised tag-team debating match, and he frequently fills the conservative slot on "Crossfire," the CNN discussion show. Somehow the pair also finds time to publish two newsletters and to write several articles a year for *Reader's Digest*.

Finally, of course, Evans and Novak continue to write four columns a week, spinning out breathless tales of bureaucratic intrigue. Here you can read about the aspirations of presidential advance men, the connivances of congressional aides, the interior world of deputy assistant secretaries. Since Ronald Reagan became president, it seems, hardly a critical memo gets drafted or a key telephone call placed that doesn't show up in Evans and Novak. They may well have better sources inside the administration than any other journalists, making their column one of the most closely read in Washington.

Curiously, though, while their star has soared in Washington, Evans and Novak have hit on hard times in the rest of the country. "Inside Report," as the column is called, has lost favor with editors from coast to coast. Anthony Day, editorial pages editor of the *Los Angeles Times*, says he dropped the column when he became concerned about its accuracy. "Inside Report," which ap-

peared in more than 250 daily papers in the mid-1970s, is carried by only 150 today. Here are some reasons why:

December 16, 1981: Evans and Novak, quoting presidential advisers, predict that "Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski will lose his martial law gamble, leading to direct Soviet intervention in Poland and perhaps costing the lives of hundreds of thousands of fighting Poles."

September 21, 1984: Evans and Novak, citing CIA intelligence estimates, report "suspicions of an imminent Soviet move from Afghanistan into the northern tip of Pakistan."

January 28, 1985: Evans and Novak, observing Konstantin Chernenko on his deathbed, write that "Surprisingly, the charismatic Mikhail Gorbachev, at 52 the Politburo's youngest member, is no longer considered the heir apparent."

A survey of more than 250 columns written since 1981 indicates that Evans and Novak, never known for their moderation, have grown increasingly strident. Long forced to sit on the political periphery, they have had the satisfaction of seeing America come around to their point of view. But as the nation has shifted to the right, so have Evans and Novak. Today they champion the gold standard and call Roberto d'Aubuisson a "democratic capitalist." Remarkably, the more outlandish Evans and Novak become, the more their renown inside the Beltway grows.

As a byline, Evans and Novak have been inseparable for years; in real life, they could hardly be more apart. Rowly Evans, 64, is a product of Philadelphia's Main Line. The son of a Quaker insurance broker, he attended the Kent School and enrolled at Yale. After a year mostly spent playing bridge, Evans dropped out of college to work in the Chicago freight yards. After the war he returned to Philadelphia and got a job with the *Bulletin*. He soon went to Washington and eventually took a job with the bureau of the *New York Herald Tribune*. The *Trib* encouraged Evans to write a column, but wanted it to appear six days a week.

To help out, Evans enlisted Robert Novak. Novak, now 54, grew up in a Jewish household in Joliet, Illinois, the son of a chemical engineer. He attended the University of Illinois, then went to work for two small Illinois newspapers. In 1958 he joined the Washington bureau of the *Wall Street Journal* and soon gained a reputation as one of the best reporters in town.

Today Evans's elegant suits and buffed oxfords give him

Michael Massing, a New York writer, is former executive editor of *Columbia Journalism Review*.

the sleek look of a squire. The aristocratic air is heightened by a high, balding forehead and stylishly long complement of hair in back. Appearances aside, Evans has a relaxed, companionable manner that has made him popular with colleagues of all political persuasions. Three mornings a week he has breakfast with sources at the Metropolitan Club, Washington's stuffiest. He and his wife, Kay, editor of the *Washington Journalism Review*, are known for hosting dinner parties in their Georgetown town house, often with a senator or Supreme Court justice in attendance.

One person rarely invited to Evans's house is Bob Novak. The two do not often socialize outside the office. At dinner parties Novak likes to goad guests, thumping the table to reinforce his case on supply-side economics and other self-styled heresies. Those who disagree are frequently branded "wimps." Novak also plays the heavy on "The McLaughlin Group," the show that lets grown men discuss big issues and act like little boys.

Such antics have earned Novak the nickname "Prince of Darkness." The term, coined by *Newsweek* years ago, has stuck, thanks to Novak's swarthy complexion and gruff disposition. Novak revels in the role—which is exactly what it is. In real life Novak is a schmoozer and rabid sports fan who reads the morning line before the front page. Appearances on "McLaughlin" to the contrary, Novak and rival columnist Jack Germond have been good friends for 25 years. Both belong to a generation of talented Washington reporters who came of age in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

When they began their column, in 1963, Evans and Novak were hardly conservative ideologues. Both men voted for John Kennedy in 1960. Though he had no discernible politics, Evans had become friendly with Kennedy and his circle while covering the Senate. As president, Kennedy once came to Evans's house for dinner. Novak was much more of a political animal. Then, however, his bile was reserved mostly for the right. During the 1964 campaign, Novak frequently attacked Barry Goldwater, and at the GOP convention he gained some notoriety by decking a recalcitrant Young Republican. Novak was close to Lyndon Johnson, and the first book he co-authored with Evans, a political biography of LBJ, was full of evident admiration as well as superb reporting. The column itself was relatively nonpartisan, mixing Evans's many connections and Novak's political instincts to produce a stream of scoops.

IN THE LATE 1960s, the column began to take on its current cast. Evans and Novak detected extremist elements inside the civil rights movement and attacked Lyndon Johnson for his failure of nerve on Vietnam. By 1972 the column was attacking George McGovern with such vehemence that Novak was thrown off the candidate's plane. As for Jimmy Carter, "Inside Report" could barely mention him without a sneer.

The columnists thus greeted the election of Ronald Reagan with joy. On the day after his inauguration, for in-

stance, they confidently asserted that "never again will the United States allow itself to be held hostage by seizure of American citizens." Five months into the president's term they published *The Reagan Revolution*, a book that put Ronald Reagan's first 100 days on a par with Franklin Roosevelt's.

But before long, "Inside Report" was having second thoughts. At first, the column criticized "pragmatists" like Jim Baker and Michael Deaver for blunting the president's true instincts. The following year, Evans and Novak openly blamed Ronald Reagan himself. In "Giving Up on the Reagan Revolution," they gloomily concluded: "There is no longer any hope that the septuagenarian president, while joined to the right in spirit, is in any way prepared to lead a crusade for change."

EVANS AND NOVAK found a new standard-bearer in Jack Kemp. Kemp embodied the ideologically pure vision that Reagan had relinquished. Most important, he was a strong advocate of supply-side economics. Novak had been converted in 1978, becoming one of the first journalists in the country to adopt the new creed. Now Evans and Novak took up Kemp's case as vigorously as they had Reagan's only months before. In June 1982 they wrote a Kemp profile for *Reader's Digest*. Headlined "Is He the GOP's Future?" the article gushed with references to Kemp's "gutsy confidence" and "his almost insatiable appetite for new ideas." Kemp's agenda, the *Digest* piece claimed, "could well define the dimensions of a future Presidential campaign." Today "Inside Report" regularly boosts Kemp's presidential prospects while running down those of his chief rivals, George Bush and Robert Dole.

Kemp is a regular Evans and Novak source. So, reportedly, are Edwin Meese, Richard Perle, and Pat Buchanan. They have provided a direct pipeline into the Reagan administration, enabling Evans and Novak to depict its internal skirmishes in technicolor. For instance, regular readers of "Inside Report" weren't surprised by Alexander Haig's resignation. The column had exhaustively chronicled his recurrent battles with the White House. "Who Hid Reagan's Memo?" asks one typical column.

Outside conservative Republican circles, Evans and Novak are often in the dark. Tom Oliphant, a *Boston Globe* reporter who calls himself "an unabashed fan" of the column, adds: "In the late 1960s and early 1970s, they were marvelous on the inside baseball of the Democratic Party. Nowadays I get the impression that if Bob Strauss has a cold and can't come to the phone, they're almost out of business."

The result is frequent improvisation. A fine example appeared on December 28, 1983, in a column headlined "Charles Wick Retreats." The lead urgently declared: "An attempted appeasement of Democratic critics in the Senate resulted in humiliating political retreat for the Reagan administration when USIA Director Charles Z. Wick signed secret terms of surrender." The column went on to describe how "hard-driving Charley Wick" had agreed to

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stop financing political seminars for foreign visitors "after liberal Senate Democrats complained about their right-wing orientation. . . ." The villain: Peter Galbraith, a staff member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee whose views "are variously described as ranging from 'left-wing' to 'moderate,' " and who was said to be working on behalf of liberal senator Claiborne Pell.

The column was classic Evans and Novak. It had a breathless lead, bureaucratic maneuvering, a scheming liberal staffer, and above all, evidence of conservative capitulation. Unfortunately, it was wrong on almost every detail. The senator most troubled by the USIA's activities was not Pell but Edward Zorinsky of Nebraska, who is probably the committee's most conservative Democrat. Furthermore, the charges against the agency were non-ideological in nature, concerning conflicts of interest and violations of the USIA charter. Once the irregularities became public, an embarrassed Wick rushed to put matters straight.

COME ALONG NOW for an Evans and Novak tour of the globe. Hold on tight, though—the ride may get a little choppy.

Southern Africa. Arriving here in September 1981, we see the bodies of two Soviet officers, killed during a South African raid against SWAPO military installations in southern Angola. These are not simply two more victims of an endlessly bloody war. Comrades Kireev and Lamontavich are evidence that "Moscow seeks to transform black Africa guerrilla actions into a conventional war capability against South Africa-controlled Namibia and eventually against South Africa itself." The Russian plan is to integrate SWAPO with the Angolan army in order to attack South Africa. The real stunner of the column, though, is its assertion that the Soviets "seek to divert" South Africa from its problems in Namibia by "opening up a second anti-South Africa front from Mozambique." The objective: "locking up the greatest mineral storage house in the world and controlling oil traffic around the Horn."

Four years later, SWAPO continues to struggle as a hit-and-run guerrilla force, and the only front in Mozambique consists of antigovernment Renamo rebels widely believed to enjoy South Africa's backing. In fact, Mozambique has moved progressively closer to the United States.

Argentina. It's April 1982, just before the Falklands war, and the Soviet Union, we are told, "cannot resist poking into fresh trouble when the opportunity arises."

Senior presidential advisers fear that if Argentina is forced to retreat precipitously, an anti-U.S. government more nationalistic than the present military regime may take over. With the Soviet Union then in the forefront as Argentina's new best friend and the United States cast in the villain's role, there arises the prospect of Soviet-Argentine friendship unimaginable before the Falklands crisis. As a bonus, the Soviets might acquire naval ports in the South Atlantic, valuable help for their growing fleet of submarines.

Of course, Argentina's precipitous retreat in the Falklands led to the abrupt collapse of the military junta, bring-

ing to power a democratic government that has since worked to exorcise the scourge of nationalism. Needless to say, the Soviets are nowhere to be found.

China. "China's Chill," appearing in June 1983, describes the deteriorating relations between Beijing and Washington. The column scornfully dismisses the "New China Hands" in the U.S. Embassy who counsel a policy of accommodation. The real cause for estrangement, we learn, has "less to do with policy in Washington than with the nature of the Chinese communist state." The column warns of growing rapprochement between China and the Soviet Union. Among the pieces of evidence: the sight of "a Russian and several important-looking Chinese cadres in protracted conversation, punctuated by periodic laughter, at Peking airport's waiting room." Such cordiality sends a clear message: "the intimate link envisaged by the New China hands is beyond reach." Seven months after the column appeared, Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang visited the United States, and four months later Ronald Reagan visited China—initiating a love affair between the two countries that is still aflame.

Iran-Iraq. You may not have heard of Basra, but in April 1984 Evans and Novak wrote that an upcoming Iranian campaign aimed at the Iraqi town was "assuming the rare importance of a latter-day Battle of Thermopylae." The campaign, they asserted, "is now perceived as more chilling to American interests than any other single event in the Middle East since World War II." The scenario went like this: a successful Iranian offensive would lead to the setting up of an "Islamic republic" in southern Iraq. This would force neighboring Kuwait to capitulate, followed in turn by Saudi Arabia, "the impotent oil sheikdoms," and the two Yemens. "Brutal harassment of Americans, not excepting murder, would follow."

IN FACT, the Iranian offensive fizzled, and the flag of the "Islamic republic" never flew. And, at last check, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the sheikdoms, and the Yemens were still there.

Grenada. Three days after the U.S. invasion, Evans and Novak attributed the murder of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop—which had precipitated the invasion—to Bishop's meeting the previous summer with American National Security Adviser William Clark. They wrote that Bishop had been killed because of the "fear of fellow Grenadian Marxists, shared by Moscow and Havana, that he was deserting to the West." This was the boilerplate analysis offered by the Reagan administration. But later the line changed. In 1984 the State and Defense departments published a collection of documents seized in Grenada that, in the administration's analysis, showed no "strong divergence of views between Bishop and those who replaced him; rather, the struggle appears to have been almost exclusively personal." It said there was "no evidence" that Cuban or Soviet dissatisfaction—or the meeting with Clark—played any role in Bishop's removal. Evans and Novak were left high and dry.

Nicaragua. Their greatest scoop came in October 1981.

"Bridge Over the River Lempa" began:

Between 500 and 600 troops of Cuba's "quick strike" special forces flew surreptitiously to Nicaragua last month—with Cuba's ambassador to Nicaragua aboard the last flight—in a move that may be aimed at setting up a revolutionary Marxist government in eastern El Salvador.

Fidel Castro's gall and self-confidence in transporting a concealed strike force . . . for combat in beleaguered El Salvador has shocked the highest officials in the Reagan administration.

The evidence for this "Cuban foreign intervention" was said to come from "unimpeachable Latin American sources." According to these sources, the strike force had arrived "exactly" 26 days before the recent destruction of a bridge over El Salvador's Lempa River, connecting the eastern third of El Salvador with the rest of the country. Castro was expected to direct his force in Nicaragua "to occupy, without possibility of military resistance, the eastern third of El Salvador, establish a Soviet-backed communist government and use it to rally world support for the so-called Democratic Revolutionary Front." The column added that the imminence of Cuban intervention posed a "critical choice" for the Reagan administration: "to tell the world the truth about the advanced stage of Castro's Soviet-backed plan to seize control of El Salvador and meet it head-on; or to continue fudging the issue in hope that some miracle will make it go away."

Such a miracle did occur: Evans and Novak stopped writing about the planned invasion, and it went away.

MY INTERVIEW with Rowland Evans took place at the Metropolitan Club, in a huge sitting room with wood paneling, ornate windows, and elegant chandeliers. We sat facing one another in leather armchairs—the only two people in the room. I asked Evans about the River Lempa piece. "This very rarely happens," he told me. "I got a call from a very high official at State, who said, 'I have an interesting intelligence report that we're convinced is true.' So I went over to the State Department, and the information was so sensitive that he would only read it to me. I found it very difficult to prove it or check it out. I asked at the Pentagon, the Agency, but nobody really knew." Nonetheless, Evans said, he decided to go ahead with the story. "In my defense," he added, "I'd say the thrust of the column was accurate. There was a force that arrived, disguised as teachers. But it was a less significant force than I'd been told. The intelligence information did not convey the full story. There were inaccuracies in it." Months after the column appeared, Evans says, his source apologized to him. No correction ever appeared, however.

I also asked Evans about the prediction that Gorbachev had been passed over as Chernenko's successor. This time, he said, the source wasn't at State but at another "clearly identifiable" government agency. Going with the story "was a very, very close decision," he said, and in the end, "it was wrong." As an afterthought, he added, "I don't care whether it's Gorbachev or Grishin

[another contender]. They're all sons of bitches."

He went on: "I think a reporter who's got a reputation for decency and honesty has every right to print this as a probable thing. You might ask, 'Why didn't you check it out at State, the CIA, DIA, people in Moscow, Britain, and France?' That's a valid question. The answer is, you can't—you don't have time. By the time you checked it all out, the idea would be dead and buried. A reporter in this town, especially one who writes on deadlines four times a week, always has a very, very difficult question of judgment. The only fair way to judge a reporter is by taking the body of his work. I challenge you to take the full body of our columns and see where they come out."

MY INTERVIEW with Robert Novak took place in the Evans and Novak office, a block from the White House. I was ushered into a small, functional room filled with torn vinyl furniture. On the walls were photos of Evans and Novak consulting with the leading political figures of our time—Johnson, Humphrey, Kissinger, Nixon. "Support Nicaraguan Freedom Fighters," declared a bumper sticker on the door; a poster bearing the CBS eye proclaimed, "Rather Biased."

I asked Novak about the falloff in the number of papers carrying "Inside Report." "We're the oldest major syndicated column in America," he replied. "We've been around for a long, long time. People get tired of it." He added that "the whole future of the syndicated column is clouded. You can see that by counting the number of new columnists who have come on the scene in recent years. It's a feat for us to have continued as long as we have." Besides, he said, "We're controversial and abrasive."

The Prince of Darkness sounded tired. He had arrived in town early that morning on the red-eye flight from California, then joined Evans to tape a TV interview with Gary Hart. He also had to write an extra column in anticipation of Thanksgiving. In fact, Novak was going to cancel our interview until I told him on the phone, in a voice thick with disappointment, that I had just traveled 200 miles to interview him. "All right, come on over," he said. "I can give you ten minutes." We ended up talking for half an hour. The phone rang constantly throughout our conversation. At the end, as he hurried back into his office, Novak apologized for being so rushed. As I left I heard him plaintively call out to his staff, "Would somebody get me my own bathroom key?"

Bermuda, CNN, "McLaughlin," Gary Hart—Evans and Novak have come a long way from the days when they covered Capitol Hill. Along the way something has gone out of their work, however, and that's the capacity to outrage. It's no fault of their own. At one time, columns about second fronts in Mozambique, Soviet incursions into northern Pakistan, and Cuban strike forces would cause people to protest, fume, and mutter about how those guys were at it again. Today nobody looks twice. After all, their columns don't seem much different from what comes out of the Reagan administration. In fact, that's where they get most of this stuff. □

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

The African Queen

Meryl Streep is back in top form. This means that her performance in *Out of Africa* is at the highest level of acting in film today. Also, since she is Streep, it means that a return to form is not a return: she has realized a character utterly different from any she has done before. As was true of Brando, Streep uses her star status to risk versatility, not to sell a

Out of Africa
(Universal)

standard product. In her last film, *Plenty*, she faltered: as the postwar Englishwoman, she lacked confidence, the crisp English enjoyment of comic bitterness. As Karen Blixen, Streep is superb.

Remember that Streep has previously done such roles as the small-town checkout girl in *The Deer Hunter*, the Southern aristocrat in *The Seduction of Joe Tynan*, the 19th-century romantic in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, the Polish refugee in *Sophie's Choice*, and the Southern factory worker in *Silkwood*; and her achievement here seems all the more splendid. In *Out of Africa*, she is the Danish gentlewoman who runs an African farm for 17 years before going home to become the renowned author Isak Dinesen. Certainly Streep was helped by the director Sydney Pollack; she has been exquisitely costumed by Milena Canonero in styles that range from 1914 to 1931; she has been subtly made up by J. Roy Helland to make her cheekbones look higher, her eyes a bit smaller, and to give her face a Nordic cast something like the young Blixen. But it was Streep herself who mastered the Danish accent. (I saw Dinesen's one American TV appearance in 1959. Her voice was deeper, Delphic, but, as far as I can recall, Streep has the same accent and lilt.) She uses the accent and the accoutrements like an artist: to realize the vision with which she began. First she saw Karen Blixen, then moved into her. We feel that, if she were cut,

she would bleed Blixen blood.

Streep becomes—we may as well say “becomes”—the young Danish woman who emigrates to East Africa to marry a Swedish baron whom she likes rather than loves and to start a coffee plantation with him. He is not much use. She plunges into the work of the plantation; falls profoundly in love with the people and landscape and animal life and weather and air. She contracts syphilis from her husband and has to go home for treatment. When she returns to Africa, she finds more kinds of courage in herself with which to face physical and moral crises. She divorces, then takes a lover who is eventually killed in a plane crash. At the last she leaves Africa, still the quietly elegant woman she was when she came but with new ideas of devotion and strength and greater perception of mystery. Streep embraces all of this woman with affection and ease, with originality that comes from truth, not from oddity. Her voice, though it is not yet what it may become, is limbered by the accent and lilt. Her bearing and movement are simply noble. It is beautiful acting.

Robert Redford is Denys Finch Hatton, her lover, and, as always, is an attractive screen presence. The role makes no demands on him that he can't meet easily—the professional hunter who likes his independence—except one that he ignores completely. Finch Hatton was the son of an earl, but Redford doesn't attempt an English accent though his friends are played by English actors. It sounds odd. Karen's husband is Klaus Maria Brandauer, who is more subtle here than he was in either *Mephisto* or *Colonel Redl*. When Brandauer has to express heavy emotion, he himself always seems to get heavier, fleshier. Here no such moments are called for, only several sorts of caddish reticence, which he supplies with properly detestable charm.

Suzanna Hamilton, so vivid in *1984* and *Wetherby*, is a budding English girl

in the colony, and does her considerable best to define an undefined role. Among the many other actors, Malick Bowens excels as Farah, Karen's dignified and devoted Somali servant—tall, taciturn, winning.

When I saw that David Watkin was the cinematographer—his most recent film was *White Nights*—my heart jumped because I knew that the exteriors had been shot in Kenya. No disappointments here. Some of the compositions are predictable and probably inevitable: the sunsets, the silhouette processions along ridges; but Watkin looks at everything with the intent of getting at its essence freshly. His wizardry verifies the East Africa that Karen Blixen talks about—and that Isak Dinesen later wrote about.

Sydney Pollack might be called a Streep among directors because of his versatility, except that his work is more reliable than extraordinary. His last film

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Fool for Love. Sam Shepard's first screenplay from a play of his own is bloated with symbols and Robert Altman's arty direction. But some Shepard crackle is left; and he, as a rodeo performer, and Kim Basinger, as the half sister linked with him in love, are fine. (Reviewed 12/23/85)

Ran. Japanese for “chaos.” Akira Kurosawa's latest and last work, based on King Lear, is set in 16th-century Japan. It misses tragedy, but it is marvelously powerful through Kurosawa's mastery of armies in motion and battle as agon. (1/6&13/86)

Shoah. A monument to memory, rather than a documentary. Claude Lanzmann interviewed witnesses of the Final Solution—survivors, bystanders, participants—shot 350 hours of film in 14 countries, and wove the result into nine-and-a-half hours of experience that supplements what we have read about the Holocaust with ineradicable presence. (Note: every foot of this film was made after 1976; none of it is archival.) (10/28/85)

SK

was the adroit *Tootsie*; before that, among others, there were *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?*, the undervalued *Jeremiah Johnson*, and *Three Days of the Condor*. Scene by scene Pollack has directed *Out of Africa* firmly, sympathetically. (He has often worked with Redford. I noted that the only huge close-up in the film is of Redford.) In none of his films is there anything that can clearly be called a Pollack style. Without such a style, the best that a director can do is to be invisible, which means doing nothing wrong. Almost all the time, Pollack has this rare negative virtue.

The one troubling element is the screenplay by Kurt Luedtke. His only previous film was *Absence of Malice*, also directed by Pollack, and doubtless Pollack had a hand in modeling this new script. Luedtke has gifts: he writes brisk, understated dialogue and many well-shaped scenes. But he had difficulties here. His screenplay was drawn from *Out of Africa* and other Dinesen writings; from *Silence Will Speak*, a biography of Finch Hatton by Errol Trzebinski; and from Judith Thurman's biography of Dinesen. (Thurman is an associate producer of the film.) Those sources are both the blessing and burden of the script. Obviously, they provide the wonderful leading character and her wonderful experiences; but they bind the script to factuality, to the

effect of chronicle instead of drama. Luedtke has slimmed and trimmed details (though the running time is two-and-a-half hours), and, so far as I can see, without serious alteration. But this fidelity, which was imperative, means that the film tends to meander, rather than course strongly, especially toward the end. It's a familiar cleft stick. The only solution I can think of is that Luedtke might have made greater use of narration. He uses a flashback technique: we get a very brief early glimpse of the aged author, and her voice, heard from time to time throughout, puts the whole picture in a frame of memory. The narration could have been used to condense more minor material, like the horse show.

But even in the last half hour or so, when we feel that the film is winding on in fidelity rather than urgency, Streep never wavers. Her performance is always so true, so *interesting*, that she holds us by the living of Karen's life, even when strophes are repeated or intensity fluctuates.

One last aspect: the film functions two ways in time. It derives, in substantial part, from Dinesen's writing that was yet to come; yet what we see happening "now" is the source of the writings from which the "now" derives. To think that when this extraordinary African career of Karen Blixen's is over, Isak Dinesen is waiting to be born. That is thrilling.

and classification as well as actual crime. But the rate of intentional homicide—the figure most likely to reflect real changes in crime rather than in statistics—was still 61 percent higher last year than 20 years ago. And all other ways of measuring crime confirm the upward trend: even the recent tapering off of violent crime has left our country plagued with devastatingly high levels, and no apparent relief is in sight. City dwellers aren't just imagining that the streets have become much more threatening and violent. They really have. And the damage this is doing to our country is hard to overestimate.

A walk to the corner newsstand or bus stop requires dozens, even hundreds, of judgments about how complete strangers are likely to behave as they pass us on the sidewalk. Usually we're not even conscious of making those judgments, because we simply trust other people to leave us alone. But when just one of those hundreds and thousands of strangers steps out of the blur of faces and points a gun in your side, or tries to force his way into your apartment or your car—or when it happens to your neighbor, or even when you read about it in the local newspaper—the assumptions on which daily life depends start to collapse.

The signs of that collapse are everywhere—in the pervasiveness of fear in city streets after dark, in the huge boom in private security during the past several years, in the outpouring of support for Bernhard Goetz last winter after he shot four black teenagers on a New York subway. Fear of crime is becoming a constant of American life, and beneath the fear there is bewilderment and rage. Fear of crime is perpetuating segregation in our communities and schools, and racism in our national consciousness. It isolates and embitters us, and frays the bonds that keep our society intact.

INTO this bitter atmosphere come two important new books on crime. The political stances of their authors could not be more different, but to a surprising degree both books instruct us that the entire criminal justice system—no matter how we might transform or tinker with it—will always have little to do with why crime rates go up or down.

Harvard sociologist and political scientist James Q. Wilson became one of the most influential American writers on criminal justice and crime control

THE GREAT AMERICAN TROUBLE

Crime and Human Nature

by James Q. Wilson and Richard J. Herrnstein

(Simon and Schuster, 608 pp., \$22.95)

Confronting Crime: An American Challenge

by Elliott Currie

(Pantheon, 278 pp., \$19.95)

This country has experienced a terrifying and disastrous rise in criminal violence over the past 20 years. Not that crime rates were tolerable before: even before the present upsurge began in the 1960s, Americans murdered, assaulted, raped, and robbed one another at rates far higher than in any other Western industrial country. The rise has abated

somewhat since its worst point in the late 1970s, but crime rates are still far higher than they were in the early 1960s. Last year the odds that an American would report having been raped or robbed were three times as great as in 1964.

Crime statistics can be deceptive: they reflect the vagaries of reporting

with the publication of *Thinking About Crime* in 1975. Now, with Harvard psychologist Richard J. Herrnstein, Wilson has published his most ambitious work on crime, a 600-page textbook, *Crime and Human Nature*, which seeks answers to the question of why some people commit crimes when others do not.

After outlining a theory of criminal behavior, Wilson and Herrnstein devote nearly 500 pages to a review of the research on topics such as the relationship between crime and intelligence, physiology, personality, family, schooling, unemployment, race, drug use, and the mass media. *Crime and Human Nature* surveys an awesome quantity of criminological research on these topics—the bibliography fills 53 pages—and Wilson and Herrnstein leave the reader with a bleary-eyed sense that the more important the questions we ask about crime and criminals, the more ambiguous, contradictory, and inadequate the evidence is likely to be.

STILL, a number of conclusions do rise starkly from their mountain of data. Criminals are overwhelmingly male, and overwhelmingly young. Within this group, the criminals tend, on average, to be less intelligent and more impulsive than the noncriminals. Rates of violent crime among black Americans are far higher than among whites, and the gap has been growing dramatically over the last two decades. Beyond these generalizations about the differences between criminals and noncriminals, however, Wilson and Herrnstein's conclusions are more hedged and tentative. Despite the enormous quantity of criminological research surveyed and summarized in *Crime and Human Nature*, the authors find that the time-consuming and difficult research needed to answer many of the most important questions about crime has yet to be undertaken.

In particular, though they conclude that the traits of low intelligence and impulsive personality most persistently related to criminality appear to be set in early childhood, Wilson and Herrnstein are able to draw few firm conclusions about the relative importance of biological factors such as genetic traits and prenatal development on the one hand, and early socialization and child-rearing practices on the other. They do suggest, however, that the individual traits most characteristic of criminals appear very early in life, and that these traits are often set firmly in place before a child

ever enters school, let alone the job market. For this reason Wilson and Herrnstein are skeptical about attempts to posit a causal relationship between poor education or unemployment and crime: the rather tentative view of *Crime and Human Nature* is that offenders' poor school and employment records are less the cause of their criminal careers than they are products of the same deficits of personality and intelligence that rendered these young men susceptible to crime.

NOT surprisingly, these views receive their most modulated formulation in the chapter on race. Although the disproportionate share of crimes committed by black Americans does not come close to explaining all of the peculiarly high rates of crime in this country, it is nevertheless an important fact that any treatment of the subject must confront. Wilson and Herrnstein do stress that the huge differences in crime statistics between whites and blacks actually reflect differences in crime, rather than discrimination by police and courts. And they point to racial disparities in average IQ and standardized psychological test scores, which comport with the general findings on susceptibility to crime reported elsewhere in their book. But Wilson and Herrnstein take pains to stress that such average differences between the races are far smaller than the range of intelligence and personality among members of each racial group, and that for this reason such differences should not be viewed as an "explanation" for black crime rates. In addition, the authors are careful to leave open the possibility that the observed differences in psychological characteristics of blacks and whites are in themselves the products of the poverty, discrimination, and isolation that afflict much of black America. Ultimately, Wilson and Herrnstein simply outline four somewhat distinct theories of black crime, all of which are based upon or acknowledge the staggering disabilities imposed on black Americans by whites, and assert that the evidence now available does not permit a reliable choice between them.

This discussion of race displays little of the skepticism toward social and economic explanations of crime that characterizes the rest of *Crime and Human Nature*. Tactful as this discussion is, one can't help but suspect that its delicacy reflects Wilson and Herrnstein's under-

standable reluctance to follow through on their conservative argument in an area as charged as race. But in the rest of the book, the politically conservative implications of their conclusions are generally clear: if crime is primarily the product of biological factors and early childhood development, rather than poverty, bad schools, and unemployment, then positive social action such as full-employment policies or community development (or most anything else, for that matter) may not have any appreciable effect on crime. Indeed, Wilson and Herrnstein concede that the conclusions of their book don't point in any particular policy direction; their only concrete recommendation is that more research is needed.

Throughout most of their book, this somewhat passive stance presents itself as a reflection of the humility appropriate to social scientists whose evidence is incomplete and fragmentary. Yet at one point in their survey, their conservative political attitude showing, Wilson and Herrnstein present a cultural theory that contrasts with the tone of scientific detachment of most of their study. This comes in their discussion of the question that gives urgency to their entire field of inquiry—why crime rates have risen so dramatically since the early 1960s. Wilson and Herrnstein attempt to account for part of this sudden rise by charting the growth of what they call an "ethos of self-expression" in Western culture since the 1920s.

ACCORDING to this view, which Wilson previously presented in a 1983 revision of *Thinking About Crime*, America throughout much of the 19th and early 20th centuries managed crime by a massive social investment in "impulse control." The movements for "impulse control," Wilson and Herrnstein believe, harnessed the society's religious, educational, and moral energies to the goal of inculcating the values of internalized self-control and moral uplift among all social classes. They point to the prominence in mid- and late-19th-century America of religious, missionary, and charitable societies; the successes of abolitionism and temperance; and an array of other social movements whose unifying theme was an anti-hedonistic emphasis on the civilizing principles of self-control and delayed gratification. Among the beneficial effects of the dissemination of this Victorian morality, Wilson and Herrn-

stein suggest, was the arrest and reversal of an upsurge of crime in the early 19th century, and the relatively low crime rates of the post-Civil War era.

As they tell the tale, all of this came under attack after World War I, as American intellectuals criticized conventional American morality as unduly repressive, hypocritical, and stifling of the natural talents and energies of the young. Propelled by Freudian psychology and liberal, secular ideology, intellectuals tried to discredit child-rearing methods that stressed impulse-control over self-expression, and promoted a more permissive attitude toward the socialization and education of children. Although they place the intellectual roots of this development in the 1920s, Wilson and Herrnstein suggest that the effects of the new "ethos of self-expression" were delayed by the discipline of the Depression and world war, only to surface two generations later in the crime wave of the 1960s and 1970s.

The authors don't attribute all of the rise in crime rates to this moral and cultural shift; the greater density of an urbanized population, and the greater proportion of young people in the population, also get some of the blame. Still, given the scrupulous care with which Wilson and Herrnstein avoid assuming a causal relation between crime and skyrocketing rates of youth (and especially minority youth) unemployment during the 1960s and 1970s, the prominence in *Crime and Human Nature* of their value-laden and quite unprovable theory of the "ethos of self-expression" is startling.

THIS theory marks one of the many points of contention between their study and Elliott Currie's powerfully written and provocative new book, *Confronting Crime: An American Challenge*. Currie confronts a crucial fact that Wilson and Herrnstein by and large do not: that criminal violence in America is much worse than in any of the other industrial democracies. If some universal "human nature," rather than social conditions, explains the criminal violence that haunts us, then why, Currie asks, do Americans murder each other at seven, ten, and even 20 times the rate that Europeans and Japanese do? If the supposed leniency of our criminal justice system is at fault, then why do countries like the Netherlands, where criminal penalties are only a fraction

as severe as ours, have only a tiny fraction of the violent crime we have? If, as Wilson and Herrnstein suggest, the permissiveness of modern American child-rearing has produced new generations of criminals, then why do we have so much more crime than does Sweden, where teachers and even parents are forbidden by law to use corporal punishment on children? And if an "ethos of self-expression" that began to overwhelm Victorian morality among the Western intellectual elites some 60 years ago has (after a half-century of incubation) unleashed the long-suppressed criminal impulses of young lower-class American males in the 1970s and 1980s, why have the same cultural developments not had a similarly devastating effect on crime rates in England, France, or Germany?

Currie agrees with Wilson and Herrnstein's general contention that the way that societies raise their children has a profound effect on crime. But he argues that if we are to understand why American families produce so many more criminals than do European or Japanese families, we have to look at what differentiates our society from theirs, rather than what we all have in common. And whereas Wilson and Herrnstein focus their attention on the forces that restrain and control the human impulses that lead to crime, Currie calls for a closer look at how societies succeed or fail at creating social solidarity and support, rather than how they inculcate discipline and control.

IN Currie's view, what distinguishes the United States from the relatively crime-free societies of Western Europe and Japan is the American overemphasis on the values of the economic marketplace, at the expense of full employment and support for community and family life. Unlike Wilson and Herrnstein, who see few public policy implications in the view that the family plays a critical socializing role in preventing crime, Currie finds it significant that the United States devotes far fewer of its resources to promoting and protecting family life—through guaranteed minimum incomes, socialized child care, maternity and paternity leaves, and so on—than do the relatively crime-free democracies of Europe. American unemployment rates have been allowed to remain at levels far higher than most of those of Western Europe and Japan, creating not merely joblessness, but the

development of a permanent underclass of people for whom crime, rather than work, is the most accessible form of economic activity. Americans' sink-or-swim mentality, Currie argues, may produce a lot of goods and services, but it also produces crime—by tolerating the tangle of social pathologies of our urban slums, and the destruction of family and community life upon which any real anticrime policy must be based. Violent crime, in short, is the other side of the American free-enterprise coin. If we really want a sink-or-swim society, we'll have to accept that the millions of people who sink are first going to thrash.

Currie's compelling portrait of the sort of society that would produce less crime doesn't really tell us how to get there from here. Even if much of our crime problem stems from the harsh impact of American economic arrangements upon family and community life, the results of these arrangements have a life of their own by now. Understanding that poverty and racial exclusion—not bad genes and low intelligence—are responsible for producing so many families unable to socialize their children doesn't tell us how to reach those chil-

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dren now. Nor does it tell us how to break the cycle before their children have grown up in the same way. The tangle of crime-producing social pathologies that generations of poverty and marginalization have engendered—drug addiction and alcoholism, illegitimacy, illiteracy and violence in public schools—will not quickly melt away no matter how abruptly we abandon our current laissez-faire complacency and start treating our society's problems as soluble. And so long as crime rates remain high, all of the political pressure will be for repressive quick fixes—costly and ineffective as we already know them to be.

MOREOVER, Currie's attempt to locate the roots of our present plague of criminal violence in the peculiarities of American economic life cannot account for everything. Although modern criminal justice statistics reach back only to the 1930s, there is reason to believe that America has always had relatively high levels of criminal violence compared to Europe. Even more tellingly, the threefold difference in the homicide rate between the United States and Canada far exceeds whatever social and economic policies distinguish each country, and must in part be explained by demographic and cultural factors of the sort that Wilson and Herrnstein stress in *Crime and Human Nature*. But this is only to state the obvious, which is that answers to the question of why human beings rob, rape, and murder each other are as complex as they are urgent. By reminding us so forcefully of the fact that it is America, and not simply "human nature," that produces so much criminal violence, Currie has performed a valuable service. His energetic call for a social anticrime strategy based on full employment, community development, and family policy is a welcome contrast to the passivity of conservative thinking about crime, and a hopeful sign that the post-1960s silence of American liberalism on crime may be coming to an end.

Not all of Currie's anticrime proposals would require a fundamental shift in American social and economic priorities. Looking at more short-range criminal justice issues, *Confronting Crime* urges innovative police strategies such as greater reliance on foot patrols and more efficient use of police manpower by hiring young people for auxiliary police work; greater reliance on intensive probation and community service as al-

ternatives to imprisonment; and a more intensive assault by the police and the courts on domestic violence (one of the only areas in which the alleged leniency of the American criminal justice system is real rather than mythical). Currie also disputes the increasingly fashionable judgment of rehabilitation programs that "nothing works." He argues that rehabilitation has never been given a fair chance, because it typically expects ex-offenders to give up crime without offering a chance for meaningful and dignified work, and without changing the social environment in which they became criminals in the first place. While Currie's overall view is—like Wilson and Herrnstein's—that preventing people from growing into criminals is a much more effective crime-control strategy than trying to reform criminals who've been caught, he points to evidence that some intensive rehabilitation programs have shown significant results, and argues against what he sees as a contemporary American revival of social Darwinism that classifies huge groups of economically marginalized Americans as beyond help. But the dominant theme of *Confronting Crime* is that our plague of crime reflects the most basic arrangements of American society, and that small changes in how we respond to crime are unlikely to produce large results.

IN THE one-dimensional shorthand of American politics, Currie stands on the left, while Wilson and Herrnstein can be placed on the right. But for conservative supporters of the "hard path" to crime control—cracking down on crime by jacking up penalties—*Crime and Human Nature* provides very little encouragement either. Conservatives whose political agenda is primarily cultural and moral may draw inspiration from Wilson and Herrnstein's views about the crime-producing impact of the "ethos of self-expression," and its suggestion that a solution to our present criminal affliction may require a conservative transformation of our culture and society through a revival of Victorian social and moral attitudes. But in the meantime, locking up more criminals for longer—as virtually every conservative politician from Ed Meese on down is constantly urging—isn't likely to have much additional deterrent effect on crime.

Wilson and Herrnstein's analysis suggests that the very personality traits

that seem to account for much of the individual differences in crime—impulsiveness, overvaluation of immediate gratification, the inability to calculate or value rewards and consequences that are far off in the future—also limit the effectiveness as a deterrent of the threat of more severe punishment. The sort of people who would calculate the relative risks of a possible ten-year sentence as opposed to a two-year sentence for a given rape or robbery are, by and large, not the people who would commit rape or robbery in the first place. Most people are kept from committing crimes by their consciences or by the fear of losing their social standing and the respect of their relatives and friends. For those whose consciences and ability to plan ahead are weak, fear of enhanced punishment is unlikely to have a decisive effect on behavior.

This isn't to say that no threat of punishment works as a deterrent. But the crimes we fear most—murder, robbery, rape—already carry relatively severe penalties, and over the past 15 years our willingness to inflict those penalties has increased dramatically. In the real world of American criminal justice, robbers, rapists, and murderers do go to prison, and for a very long time; though there are always the highly publicized exceptions, they're only common on TV cop shows. As a practical matter, the policy choices facing American legislatures and criminal court judges aren't whether to send armed robbers to prison or put them back on the streets; they're whether to send them to prison for three years or for five. There's a valuable lesson to be drawn from *Crime and Human Nature* in that regard, which is that decisions about punishment are best made on moral grounds, because criminal punishments—and especially imprisonment—are very inefficient as a means of deterring crime.

NOR does imprisonment work very effectively to reduce crime by keeping criminals off the streets. The reason for this, as Currie explains in a chapter that ought to be mandatory reading for every state legislator, is that we don't know exactly whom to lock up. Only a relatively small percentage of people convicted of one violent crime are likely to be arrested for another after they are released from prison. For this reason, if we kept everyone convicted of a violent crime in prison for much longer periods than we do now, we'd

expand the size of our already massive prison systems several times over and bankrupt our state governments, while reducing the violent crime rate by only a few percentage points.

This may seem to run against common sense, but it's already been demonstrated by the dismal (and largely unremarked) history of the past 15 years' experiment with incarceration as a crime-control strategy. During the 1970s the percentage of Americans behind bars more than doubled; in some states it more than tripled. This enormous increase was not simply a reflection of the fact that more crimes were being committed. Rather, the increase outstripped the rise in the crime rate, and much of the rise in prison populations was the direct result of new mandatory minimum-sentencing laws and tougher sentencing. The increase, in other words, was real, and reflects an almost uniformly accepted national judgment that putting more criminals behind bars for longer would help reduce crime.

ONE result of this explosion of imprisonment during the 1970s and early 1980s is that America now imprisons a larger fraction of its own citizens than any other country in the world, with the exceptions of the Soviet Union and South Africa. Crime, however, continued to rise, sometimes at astounding rates, through most of the prison boom period, and the recent leveling off in crime rates, largely the result of the aging of the baby-boom generation, has been less than the aging of the population had led us to hope would occur. To be sure, most states have avoided paying the full cost for this massive social experiment by trying to cram more and more prisoners into the same limited prison space—thus producing federal court takeovers of state prison systems in one state after another. But even so, the price tag of the prison boom has been enormous, compared to the demonstrable results.

If any of the Great Society programs had poured so much money into such a sinkhole with so little measurable impact, conservatives would be citing the whole episode as still more proof of the profligate degeneracy of American liberalism. It is thus a measure of the one-sidedness of the current "debate" over crime that the state legislatures are still churning out laws to lock 'em up and throw away the key, while law-and-

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order advocates still argue that if we just got still tougher we would at last see some light at the end of the tunnel. Currie agrees that violent criminals need to be imprisoned—both as just punishment and to protect society. But in their different ways, both his book and Wilson and Herrnstein's *Crime and Human Nature* provide convincing evidence that, as a

method of controlling crime, the limits of imprisonment have already been reached. Americans need to look elsewhere for solutions that offer any hope of success.

DAVID BRUCK

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THE MEANING OF MEANING

The King of Time:
Selected Writings of the Russian Futurian
by Velimir Khlebnikov
translated by Paul Schmidt
edited by Charlotte Douglas

(Harvard University Press, 255 pp., \$18.50)

Of all the "isms" this century coined, Futurism's life span proved to be the shortest. That is owed to the future's overnight tendency to encroach on the present. In literature this process is more palpable than in other arts, because of its incurably semantic nature. To be evaluated, an utterance must make sense. To survive, it must contain a grain of truth, be that a psychological, social, scientific, philosophical, or metaphysical truth; it also has to be stylistically distinct. Short on the former and very drastic on the latter, Velimir Khlebnikov's work is a phenomenon of towering incoherence, and that is what perhaps ultimately justifies its label.

Born in 1885, Khlebnikov died at the age of 37 of typhus, which he contracted on one of his seemingly aimless wanderings through the land in which his entire adult life was spent. He was a foot and railroad-car man as much as a writer. From under his dead head a pillowcase was extracted, filled with heaps of his manuscripts: poems, plays, short stories, literary manifestos, treatises. Collected and published in 1935 and 1940, his output runs to six volumes, and the word that comes to mind considering his works' quantity and quality is exactly this: mileage.

He was a product of an era now famous for its hysterical, apocalyptic pitch, for its millenarian sensibility: the era marked by the turn of the century, Halley's comet, social utopianism, the car-

nage of the Great War, the collapse of the social order in a minimum of three European countries, the Russian Revolution, the Civil War, cinema, flying machines, and starvation. In Russia, however, it was also a period of great upsurge in religious philosophy, as well as in poetry and philology. Khlebnikov's work fell prey to all those, or vice versa; but first and foremost he was a philologist and a visionary. Naturally, this wasn't a matter of training, for at the university Khlebnikov studied physics and biology; it was a matter of vocation.

The proximity between philology—from the Greek "philo" (love) and "logos" (word or reason)—and the art of letters is such that often an individual who practices one mistakes his occupation for the other. Thus Roman Jakobson in his youth wrote poetry (which was, as a matter of fact, every bit as Futuristic as anything produced by Khlebnikov). Khlebnikov, however, was not prepared, either by his temperament or by the circumstances of his life, to make a distinction. He set out to reach two goals—first, to collect, and thereby to purify and to create, the Russian language, a process that he felt was as yet unfinished by history; and second, to discover the rhythm of world history. If for the first task he resolved to poke in the dictionaries of the Slavic peoples (Montenegrins and others, to use his own words), the latter required plain arithmetic, and he in fact came up

with the figure 317—the number of years that constituted the interval with which similar cataclysmic events changed the world.

Both tasks demanded stretching, as well as squeezing. The material of the first, however, was more pliable, and it yielded far more attractive, far less embarrassing results. Russian is a highly inflected language. A word in Russian gets changed not only by gender, number, and its grammatical function in the sentence; it is also modified by prefixes, suffixes, and infixes. This is what everyone does, but Khlebnikov went to town with it. At times his verse sounds like what birds presumably heard from St. Francis. Under his pen, nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions undergo mutations as mind-boggling as those of a cell hit by immense radiation. Beautiful or grotesque, the results are often memorable, if only because the trophy of a word's meaning is paid for with the casualties of his mutilated grammar.

About 80 percent of Khlebnikov's verse and prose are utterly unpalatable and incomprehensible. The remaining 20 percent are diamonds of an unparalleled splendor, although the trouble of extracting them from the mud heap of the rest is formidable. For that reason, and not because of Khlebnikov's anarchic cosmic worldview, the above-mentioned six volumes were never reprinted in the course of the last 40 years. He is to be represented by a selection, and this is what Nikolai Stepanov, one of the most authoritative Khlebnikov scholars, produced in Russia in 1960. This edition contained approximately 80 pieces of poetry, of various lengths, put in chronological order. A similar attempt is made now by Paul Schmidt, in English, apparently in a far more haphazard manner.

SCHMIDT'S book runs to 255 pages, out of which 100 purport to give samples of Khlebnikov's poetry; the rest contain prose (two dramatic pieces, several short stories, articles, essays, manifestos, and the treatise "The Tables of Destiny"). The prose sections, for all their innumerable mistakes, on the whole fare better because Schmidt wisely chose pieces in which the straight story-telling, didactic element is sufficiently strong. The best among them are two short plays that foreshadow the theater of the absurd; both were published in Russia in 1913. What eludes one's comprehension, however, is why it is

that Schmidt renders the title of the first one—"Mrs. Lenin"—as "Mrs. Laneen," and translates the title of the second—"World Backwards"—as "World in Reverse." If the first rendition could be ascribed to Schmidt's possibly ideological misgivings about introducing the English-speaking world to the notion of Mrs. Lenin as an insane old woman (for that's what she is in this play), then what possibly could prevent this otherwise highly enterprising translator from producing a typically Khlebnikovian neologism, "Backworlds," for that's exactly what "Mirskonza" is in Russian? No less puzzling is Schmidt's use of scissors, cutting Khlebnikov's very short personal memoir, "October on the Neva," by half.

Yet Khlebnikov's reputation is primarily that of a poet, more exactly of a poet's poet, and this is where certain practices of his translator leave a rather bad taste in the mouth of someone capable of comparing his versions to the original. At his best, Khlebnikov is an extremely difficult, highly hermetic writer, even in Russian. The very process of comprehending him is in itself a simplification. Translation is only the next step in that direction; and nobody would reproach Schmidt for taking it, had he not gone to lengths far greater than the destination requires.

Length is actually not the word, since Schmidt rather omits from the text than adds to it. The rationale behind these omissions is, interestingly enough, not that of a failing translator, but that of an editor. Presumably Schmidt tailors the material to his own liking, i.e., according to his own notion of what a successful modern poem should be. For the same reason, he reshuffles the lines like a deck of cards, writes in his own lines, skips rhymes as he pleases, alters the meter, "straightens" complex images, and juggles chronology—in general he behaves like a spoiled child at his aunt's table. Here is an example: the title of the poem is "A Zoo." It is written under the strong influence of Whitman (who was very big in prerevolutionary Russia). Hence Schmidt's title, "O Garden of Animals," and the following pastiche, in its entirety:

O Garden of Animals!

Where iron bars seem like a father who stops a bloody fight to remind his sons they are brothers.

Where eagles perch like eternity, crowned by a day without an evening.

Where a swan is like winter all over, but its beak is like autumn leaves.

Where deer are startled again and again, beneath their branching stone.

Where a clean-shaven soldier throws dirt at a tiger, all because the tiger is greater.

Where a peacock drops its tail, and it looks like Siberia seen from the height of a rock on a day of early frost, when the golden forest fire of leaf-fall enamels the green and the mottled blue of pine groves, when over it all move shadows of racing clouds, and the rock itself seems like the body of a bird.

Where fishwingers sit comically grooming each other, and display the touching compassion of Old World Landowners.

Where man and dog are strangely joined, in a baboon.

Where a camel knows the essence of Buddhism, and suppresses a Chinese smile. Where a snow-white beard surrounds the face of a tiger, surrounds its venerable Moslem eyes, and we honor the first Mohammedan and drink in the beauty of Islam.

Where a small bird drags behind itself a golden flattering sunset, to which it has learned to pray.

Where lions get up and glance with weary faces at the sky.

Where at last we grow ashamed of ourselves, and begin to think we are older, more worn than we once imagined.

Where elephants sway like mountains during an earthquake, and stick out their trunks for handouts from a small boy, saying "Feed me! Feed me!", echoing that ancient refrain. And they wheeze like pinetrees in autumn, and move their wise eyes and their undulating ears.

Where the polar bear hunts like an osprey, tracking his nonexistent prey.

Where we watch in a seal the torments of a sinner, as it cuts the water and wails its unrelenting wail.

Where the beasts have learned to sleep while we gawk.

Where the bat hangs sleeping, and its cap-sized body resembles a Russian's heart.

Where a sable displays two tiny ears, like a pair of nights in springtime.

Where I search for new rhythms, whose beats are animals and men.

Where the animals in their cages glow, as meaning glows in language.

O Garden of Animals!

Now follows this reviewer's fairly literal version of the poem. Marked in the margin are the verses omitted by the translator. Not marked are the ones re-

stored to their meaning and their position in the text, as well as those of Schmidt's own manufacture. A reader with some spare time on his hands is welcome to compare the unmarked ones with Schmidt's counterparts.

O Garden, Garden!

Where the metal is akin to a father who reminds his sons that they are brothers and stops a bloody fight.

- Where the Germans come to drink beer and the belles to sell flesh.

Where eagles perch like eternity, marked by this day with its yet unfinished evening.

Where a camel knows the clue of Buddhism and suppresses the smirk of China.

Where a deer's but a fright, blossoming wide and stone-like.

- Where people's outfits thrill and the Germans exude good health.

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Where the black stare of swan, who is each inch a winter while his beak, a knoll in autumn is too apprehensive even for him.

Where the bluest splendour fans out its tail, resembling Siberia as seen from the Pavdin Rock, when a blue net cast by clouds runs across the golden foliage of the singed or still green forests, and all of this is unevenly shaded by the roughness of surface.

Where monkeys, variously maddened, display their torsos' limits.

Where elephants, wriggling as mountains wriggle at an earthquake, beg a child for food supplying with ancient meaning the utterance, Feeeee meee! Where is my foood! and squat like beggars for handouts.

- Where Australian birds provoke a desire to grab their tails, and strumming these strings extol the deeds of the Russians.

- Where we squeeze a hand as if it were holding a sword and swear an oath to defend the Russian race at the cost of life, at the cost of death, at everything's cost.

- Where bears with great agility climb up and then look down waiting for the attendant's orders.

Where bats hang capsized like the heart of a Russian nowadays.

- Where a hawk's breast resembles the cirrus clouds before a storm.

Where a low-flying bird drags behind a golden sunset with all the embers of its fire.

Where in the person of a tiger, white-bearded and with the eyes of a venerable Moslem, we honor the first follower of the prophet and discern the essence of Islam.

- Where we begin to think that creeds are waves fanning out, that their running crests are the species.

- And that the reason that there are so many animals in the world is that they can see God in different ways.

Where animals, tired of roaring, stand and look at the sky.

Where a caged seal bustles about promptly evoking the lot of suffering sinners.

Where funny fishwingers attend to each other with the touching care of Gogol's old world landowners.

- Garden, Garden, where the stare of an animal tells more than heaps of finished books.

Garden.

- Where an eagle laments about something like a child tired of complaining.

- Where a husky wastes her Siberian ardor by performing ancient rites of tribal hostility watching a washing-up cat.

- Where billy goats plead putting through the bars a forked hoof, and assuming a complacent and cheerful expression when their wish is granted.

- Where a gyrating giraffe stands and gawks.

- Where a cannon shot at noon forces eagles to glance at the clouds in anticipation of a storm.

Where eagles fall from their high perches like idols during an earthquake from rooftops of buildings and temples.

- Where an eagle, shaggy like a girl, looks at the sky, then at its talons.

- Where in the case of an immobile deer we consider a beast-tree.

- Where an eagle sits with its neck to the public, the wings oddly spread. Does it daydream it's soaring high in the mountains? Or is it praying? Or just suffering from heat?

- Where an elk, through the fence, kisses a flat-horned buffalo.

- Where deer lick cold metal.

- Where a black seal hobbles across the floor, bending long flippers, and these movements are like those of man tied in a sack, or like those of cast-iron monuments seized by paroxysms of uncontrollable gaiety.

- Where shaggy-haired Ivanov jumps and bangs with his paw the metal when the attendant addresses him as "Comrade."

- Where lions doze off, having lowered their heads on their paws.

Where deer tirelessly knock their horns against the bars and bump their heads about.

- Where ducks of the same class rise in the dry cage the unanimous cry after a short rain as though saying a thanksgiving Mass to their deity (does it have flat feet and a beak?)

- Where guinea-fowl often look like high-pitched matrons with naked and arrogant necks and silver-ash bodies, outfitted by the same seamstress that's hired by starry nights.

- Where in a Malayan bear I refuse to recognize a fellow-Northerner and expose the hiding Mongol, and I want to avenge him for Port Arthur.

- Where wolves express readiness and loyalty with their attentively slanted eyes.

Where, having entered a musty habitat in which it's hard to stay long, I am showered with unanimous "stuuuppid!" and husks of idly but fluently prattling parrots.

- Where a fat shining walrus waves, like a tired great beauty, its black slippery fanlike leg and then falls into the water;

and when it surfaces again, its overfed powerful body displays a mustachioed, bristling, with a smooth brow, head of Nietzsche.

- Where the jaw of a white tall dark-eyed llama, or of a squat flat-horned buffalo or of other ruminants moves steadily left and right like the life of a nation.

- Where a rhino carries in its white-red eyes the undying rage of an overthrown king and alone among animals doesn't conceal its contempt for the humans as for rebellious slaves. And it hides inside Ivan the Terrible.

- Where sea gulls with long beaks and cold-blue as though bespectacled eyes have an appearance of international dealers which is confirmed by the inborn facility with which they snatch in flight the food thrown to the seals.

- Where, recalling that the Russians, in the past, called their great warriors "falcons" and that the eye of a Cossack, deeply sunk under his sharply curved eyebrow and the eye of this, royally related, bird, we begin to comprehend who steeped the Russians in the art of warfare. O falcons, breasting storks down! For all their spear-like beaks pointed upwards, O seldom the carrier of honor, loyalty and duty resorts to pinning up insects!

- Where a red, standing on its broad feet duck makes one recall the skulls of those Russians who fell for their motherland and whose rib cages its ancestors built their nests.

- Where the golden lock of a certain kind of bird contains fire of the intensity known only to those who swore eternal celibacy.

- Where Russia enunciates the word "Cossacks" the way eagles scream.

- Where elephants are forgetting their tuba-like cries and make sounds as though complaining about indigestion. Perhaps, discovering our insignificance, they find it only appropriate to make insignificant sounds? I don't know. O, gray wrinkled mountains! covered with lichens and grass in their ravines!

- Where some remarkable possibilities perish in animals, the way the breviary with The Song of Igor's Campaign did during the great Moscow fire.

The original, which was used for this translation, published in the 1960 edition of Poet's Library, Pocketbooks Series, runs to 178 lines. Schmidt's contains 47. A great deal of this, of course, is automatic writing, which is frankly Khlebnikov's signature. But what is deadwood for an editor is the text for a translator. No matter what attractive product the fusion of the two may yield, its name is a lie. Noble though

Schmidt's motives may be, he lies to his readers about what kind of poet Khlebnikov was.

To be fair to the translator, the original itself resists an accurate evaluation. In a sense, the contents of most of Khlebnikov's writing—especially his long poems, one of which, "Zangezi," is offered in this collection—can be ascertained best by a foreigner who has no particular sentiments about Khlebnikov's notion of Russian prosody as juggling the meter, resorting to atrocious compound rhymes, punning, or creating neologisms that work far less often than one wished they did. But then such a foreigner will be tempted to regard all these as experimentation, and to associate them with his notion of avant-garde. Once this word is uttered, the rest is easy: the romance with avant-garde has been going on long enough for the courtship to have developed its own tropes and inertia. All you have to do, if you are a translator of an avant-garde work, is to picture yourself being an avant-garde artist. Which means to let your hands loose.

The trouble with this posture is not that it makes randomness a law;

the trouble with avant-garde is that it, by definition, avoids maturity. Predominantly a tetrametric poet, Khlebnikov would have been better served by his translator if Schmidt had stuck to the literal renditions of his poet's lines, no matter the crypt of footnoting that would have been required. That at least would have given his readers an idea of Khlebnikov's verbal intensity and daring, as well as of his verbirosities. As it is, the book strikes a familiar, Pound-like figure, a bit on the wild side, a bit ethnic, and a lot more imaginative. A philologist, Khlebnikov believed in phonetics and maintained that by themselves letters of the alphabet reveal species' sense of space, the way numbers on a clock-dial suggest time. For all we know, he could be right. But to employ a reverse figure, this Pound, too, needed an Eliot to edit his cantos. Instead, he ended up with Schmidt.

JOSEPH BRODSKY

Joseph Brodsky's selected essays, *Less Than One*, will be published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux this spring.

KOCH AS KOCH CAN

Politics

by Edward I. Koch

(Simon and Schuster, 255 pp., \$17.95)

Mayor

by Edward I. Koch

(Simon and Schuster, 364 pp., \$17.95)

I, Koch: A Decidedly Unauthorized Biography of the Mayor of New York City, Edward I. Koch

by Arthur Browne, Dan Collins, and Michael Goodwin

(Dodd, Mead, 304 pp., \$18.95)

Often a political memoir will begin with a charming, evocative description of the author's early years and then, when it gets to the high public service that made him famous, turn deadly dull. Meetings are "stimulating," talks are "wide-ranging," world leaders are "forceful." This isn't Ed Koch's prob-

lem. In *Mayor*, his life begins with the mayoralty (almost literally—just eight lines of print cover the period from birth to age 32, when he moved out of his parents' apartment in Brooklyn), and he is never bland. As everybody must know by now, he ebulliently insults nearly the entire New York politi-



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cal firmament, and also, especially, President Jimmy Carter and his top aides.

THE insults should be taken in their context, which is a high degree of candor about everything. *Mayor* is the extremely rare book in which a politician reveals a good deal of himself. The Koch of *Politics* is more persona than personality, and the book is at heart a collection of after-dinner anecdotes ("Isn't that a nice story? Isn't that a terrific story?" says Koch after one). But the resentments and exultations are still remarkably close to the surface, considering the genre. After our leaders have been dead awhile we realize that it isn't silly to be as interested in their personality and character as in their policies. In most cases it takes that long for the truth about them to come out. But Koch, in his prime, has opened the door to understanding him as a person.

I, Koch is intended as a counterweight to *Mayor*, but the two books complement one another. (*Politics* dismisses *I, Koch* with a wave of the hand: "It is not a good book. It did not sell well.") Browne, Collins, and Goodwin, all daily reporters who covered Koch, are meticulous researchers, and they fill in his missing early life in a convincing way; *Politics* now corroborates most of the details about his political career before the mayoralty, and doesn't say a word about what went before that. Although *I, Koch's* stance is anti-Koch, it agrees with him on the essentials. In both versions, Koch has no life outside his job. In both, he is a liberal who moved to the right out of a combination of conviction and a sense of where the citywide electorate was. In both, he helped New York get back on its feet financially, through cutting spending, wheedling in Washington, and cheerleading for the city. In both, he is personally a very difficult man; in both, his deepest political rift is with blacks.

There are only two differences of fact that seemed important to me. In *Mayor*, Koch takes away the big midtown developers' tax abatements but they contribute to his 1981 reelection campaign anyway; in *I, Koch*, their contributions closely match the size of their tax abatements. In *Mayor*, during Koch's visit to a black church on Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday in 1978, a virulently anti-Semitic heckler is shushed and allowed to stay in the audience; in *I, Koch*, he's still anti-Semitic, but less so, and he's

immediately hustled out. Otherwise the differences are mostly matters of tone—but *Mayor* doesn't make him look anywhere near "pure and perfect," as *I, Koch* says it does. If that was Koch's intention (and it may not have been), he certainly fell short of fulfilling it.

KOCH has an uncanny talent for the one-line put-down that is at once so on-target, so deflating, and so memorable that its object can never fully recover. The most famous of these is the one about why Bella Abzug didn't carry her own precinct: "Her neighbors know her." (In *Mayor*, Koch also calls her a crazy and a radical.) In most of the rest, Koch claims to like his target, while at the same time letting it be known that he's onto the person's greatest flaw. In particular Koch likes to bring the sanctimonious down a peg. In recounting the story of his brief course of speech training, he can't resist mentioning that his teacher, by way of showing how discreet she is, confided to him that even the veteran un-blow-dried TV reporter Gabe Pressman is a client. Lewis Lehrman calls on him, wanting a job, and delivers a righteous conservative spiel about cutting all but the essential services of city government. "No education, Lew?" Koch asks, leaving him bleeding on the floor.

An important part of Koch's appeal is that he sees himself as an ordinary person, and he seizes the chance to show his audience that he can't be intimidated by the swells. Though he stands over six feet, after reading his books you'd swear he's short; several times he tells stories involving him standing up to an exaggeratedly tall (and usually dark) menacing figure. But there's also a mean streak in Koch—a wise guy's need to cut down others as a way of defining himself. The most egregious example is the infamous chapter of *Mayor* in which he reorganizes his administration. After his election Koch appointed seven deputy mayors, because it was good symbolism, and he was probably right to fire most of them when the time came to get things done. But he describes each firing in a degree of gruesome detail (how it was choreographed, how the press found out, who cried on getting the word and who didn't) that is squirm-inducing. These people are quasi-big shots in New York, it's true, but next to Koch they're underlings and he's kicking them when they're down. (In several cases he adds

in a footnote that the person is "still a good friend," an apparently nice remark that also delivers the message that even people he humiliates can't afford to stay on the outs with him.) In *Politics* he goes out of his way to devastate James Lanigan, a long-forgotten minor political figure of the early 1960s who was a Koch ally, in public at least. Practically the only person Koch portrays respectfully is President Reagan; every bully knows whom he can't pick on.

NOBODY can have an encounter with Koch and emerge the winner. The person who tried hardest and failed most abjectly was Carter, whose humiliation during the 1980 campaign Koch recounts with great glee. Koch wants money for New York from Carter, wants stronger support of Israel, and also knows that Carter is not extremely popular in New York. Summoned to the White House to discuss Israel, Koch brings his budget officer along; immediately following a private lunch with Carter, he publicly criticizes the administration's position on Israel; he tells the Carter people he is "supportive, but without much energy," and then, at the height of the campaign, meets with Reagan and tells reporters he's better on Israel than Carter. At one point Koch and Carter are on a dais together, Koch is booed, and Carter instinctively moves two steps away from him—again, in an especially devastating way, Koch has discovered his adversary's worst character flaw, the calculation underneath Carter's veneer of love. It's no contest: in the end Koch gets almost everything he wanted, including not being strongly tied to Carter in the public mind, and Carter gets almost nothing.

Surely everyone who's been burned by Koch must often reflect, longingly, on how easily he could have ended up as a nobody, and wonder how he got so far so fast. He was a junior congressman who ran an anemic race for mayor of New York in 1973, and he started the 1977 race far back in a crowded field. By 1981 he was reelected in a huge landslide. He was reelected in another landslide this year, and at this point the idea of his running another time or two doesn't seem farfetched. The mayoralty chewed up Abraham Beame and John Lindsay; Joe Bonanno says even Mafia leaders in New York burn out young. But Koch seems indestructible. He is extremely popular with his public, but

not, as in the case of Huey Long or Jesse Jackson, at the expense of being regarded by the establishment as a demagogue. The *Nation* and the *Village Voice* may hate him, but his respectable support runs leftward from the *National Review* all the way to the *New York Times* (usually via THE NEW REPUBLIC). For reasons including but not limited to sheer luck, the city is booming compared with ten years ago (though squalor is everywhere visible, part of the fabric of life in a way that it isn't in other American cities); it's no longer a ward of the state and federal governments; and it's running a surplus. Certainly Koch will go down in history as one of New York's dominant mayors. In *Politics* he says, in the manner of Ernest Hemingway's banter about stepping into the ring with Mr. Turgenev, "I want my administration as Mayor to surpass that of La Guardia."

HE SEEMS an odd figure for it—he isn't a born winner who's always had a golden touch, like Reagan or Franklin Roosevelt. *I, Koch* shows that he grew up in near-poverty, and of an especially painful kind: his immigrant parents were downwardly mobile, thanks to the Depression, and had to move in with more solvent relatives in Newark. He was a tall, gangly, awkward boy, not especially popular, not an outstanding student, not a leader. In World War II he was an infantry private. He finished law school but not college, and his office was a shabby suite of rooms with a Wall Street address. *I, Koch* unearths a teenage incident in which Koch grabbed his date's breasts and tries to build it into a Jamesian obscure hurt, setting off a lifetime of woman-avoidance; if this isn't convincing, it is indisputable that he was a lonely man before becoming mayor. "Politics was his whole life," Browne, Collins, and Goodwin say. In describing losing a race for state Assembly in 1962, Koch uses the word "devastating" three times in eight lines. From the beginning, it was specifically the mayoralty that he wanted. When he was a congressman, Washington bored him, and he didn't make much effort to conceal his burning desire to get to Gracie Mansion. Surely one reason he won in 1977 is that of all the candidates, he was the one who most badly wanted the job, and so the one who worked the hardest. *I, Koch* says he later told an aide (unnamed) that if he had

lost, he would have committed suicide.

Koch entered politics through the Village Independent Democrats, a reform group operating in the backyard of the king of Tammany Hall, Carmine DeSapio, whom the VID dethroned in 1961. Opposition to clubhouse politics was a matter of principle to most of the VID, but to Koch it seemed to have been more temperament and a sense that the old system was dead. (Once, after a spat with the VID, he actually joined DeSapio's organization, and it gives something of the flavor of the VID at the time that when Koch first ran for office as its standard-bearer it was only after James Baldwin and Theodore Bikel had said no.) Not by accident, just as Tammany was dying, media politics was being born in New York. In 1965 Lindsay became the first mayor to win on the sponsorship of David Garth, the political adman who has worked for Koch in all three of his successful mayoral races. It's striking, in *Mayor*, how little the old clubhouse system matters, and how well Koch understands this. In a book that describes city governance in sometimes excruciating detail, Meade Esposito, the Brooklyn Democratic leader, is mentioned exactly once (in *Politics*,

Koch describes imploring Esposito in 1977 not to endorse him publicly); Koch mentions Donald Manes, the boss of Queens, three times, twice in passing and once for comic relief in the middle of Koch's fights with Carter, an old-fashioned pol calling to talk simultaneously about dieting and restaurants.

What replaced the clubhouses as the city's political power centers were, to some extent, economic confederations such as unions, tenants' organizations, and banks; also organizations of minority groups, especially blacks, Hispanics, and Jews; and above all, a kind of freewheeling daily consensus formed around what's in the press. Koch exemplifies the power shift. He doesn't care a whit about the classic city-jobs-for-political-loyalty trade around which New York government used to revolve, and his motto is "How'm I doing?"—a question it's hard to picture DeSapio asking. Press coverage is his obsession, one that has served him well. An example of the relative importance of the old and new political forms is Koch's relationship with Charles Rangel, the congressman from Harlem. Rangel was one of the very few major politicians to endorse Koch in 1977, but he later played to his

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constituents by attacking Koch in the press. Guess which is more important? "We may have had some kind of commitment, but it is over," Koch tells him.

It may be cold to tell tales like that, but who can fail to feel a frisson at being allowed to hear them? Though the degree to which Koch triumphs in every encounter may be exaggerated in the retelling, the political world Koch describes doesn't sound like a cleaned-up Potemkin version, but the real thing. The characters, including Koch, are jealous, smart, tough, hypocritical when necessary, yet fundamentally not at all venal. In instance after instance, *Mayor* conveys the feel of how things really work: Koch and then-governor Hugh Carey engaging in a perpetual Alphonse-and-Gaston routine because neither knows which one is the more important; Koch changing his position on Westway in return for arranging for someone else to take the blame for the next increase in the transit fare; Koch trying to kill a South Bronx housing project he knows is a dog, then endorsing it when he realizes its importance as a symbol, but sticking the feds with the bill. Koch crows over his discovery of political gold in the term "wacko." He wiggles out of a campaign promise to appoint Edward Costikyan first deputy mayor. He analyzes his loss in the 1982 governor's race with the utter dispassion about himself that every first-rate politician can summon. He says in the

same breath that he finds quotas abhorrent and that he'll have more blacks in his administration than Beame did in his. He uses, over and over, the ultimate threat in modern-day New York politics: "... or there will be a nasty little news story about you."

OVERALL, an important part of *Mayor*'s aura of verisimilitude is its sense of city politics as a matter of action, not contemplation. Though Koch's instincts are plain throughout *Mayor*, he doesn't get around to discussing his public philosophy until page 304, and even then it only lasts for a paragraph, which begins: "It is not possible to remake the world. You can fix parts, but you can't remake the world. I have also come to the conclusion that everything moves like a pendulum." The ruminations in *Politics* are mostly about how to get elected and run a government, or about Koch's dislike of, in his words, the richies, elitists, radicals, chi-chis, and goo-goos. Mario Cuomo, Koch's greatest rival, is wonderful at presenting himself as the great-souled man who wouldn't dirty himself with the kind of thoughts that fill the pages of *Mayor* and *Politics*. No doubt Koch feels he knows otherwise (though it's a measure of his fear of Cuomo that he doesn't cut him up much in either book). It's part of his worldview that anybody who claims to be preoccupied with elevated matters is just being sanctimonious. The final secret of Koch's success, his conservative drift (from Manhattan to Queens, you might say) during the 1970s, coincided with the perfection of his public personality as the average middle-class guy. "You demonstrate that what you are doing is what they would be doing if they were in your place," he says.

On race, Koch constantly strikes this pose—I'm just being hardheaded and sensible, but in black New York I've wandered into an irrational land of hatreds, past grievances, and symbols, where quips aren't allowed. The question of whether Koch is a racist boils down to whether he's the totally candid, breezy, commonsense figure he claims to be. *I, Koch* made news by reporting that Koch called Congressman Ron Dellums a Watusi, and that he repeatedly refers to blacks as *shvartzes*. (Koch, grateful to Dellums for not making anything of this, co-dedicated *Politics* to him, calling him "a credit to his constituency. . . .") Is this just the kid from Newark talking—unable to self-censor, irresistibly

drawn to the insult—or does it signal the presence of hatred in his heart, or if not that a calculated appeal to the haters?

Even if the more innocent answer is the right one, the problem persists. Hearing again and again about the "sensitivity" of racial issues must drive Koch crazy—he says that the closing of Sydenham Hospital in Harlem, the occasion of his worst racial fight, was just good policy, and even *I, Koch* doesn't vigorously dispute him on that. But he must know that on race, as on all issues, there's substance and there's symbolism. In *Politics*, he comes up with all the right gestures to keep his Puerto Rican nationalist and Irish Republican constituents happy, even if he doesn't much agree with them. On black-white relations, though, his symbolic message to New York isn't "We are in a time of constrained resources and it pains me that the ghetto has to share in the cutting"; it is "It's time to stand up to the blacks." It wouldn't be hard to send a different signal, and it would help. Purely symbolic events—the march on Washington, John F. Kennedy calling Martin Luther King Jr. in jail—have done a lot to make race relations better. To strike the pose of a pure rationalist on race is playing coy, especially for Koch, a pure rationalist on little else.

IF KOCH isn't dealing with blacks in such a way as to send a signal to whites, then he's the prisoner of his own smart-aleckiness—he's wisecracking instead of preaching because he's temperamentally incapable of doing otherwise. It's the essence of his style never to come across as heavy and solemn; he uses irreverence as the universal defense against the discouragements of life. Usually it's refreshing. Sometimes it seems insensitive or even mean—it takes a certain hardness to go around talking about wackos in a city where thousands of deinstitutionalized mental patients live on the streets. On racial issues, where high-flown bring-us-together rhetoric truly can help, it means at the very least missing opportunities for healing and progress. Koch is unusual for being a leader who abhors the standard dull mock-sincerity of politics. But if he's unable to be sincere when it's called for, he won't be remembered as admiringly as he'd like to be.

NICHOLAS LEMANN

Nicholas Lemann is a national correspondent for the *Atlantic*.

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BLOOMSBERRIES ON THE COUCH

Bloomsbury/Freud:

The Letters of James and Alix Strachey, 1924-25

edited by Perry Meisel and Walter Kendrick

(Basic Books, 360 pp., \$21.95)

Last summer in London I lamented to a British historian of medicine that there was no book on the rise of psychoanalysis in England comparable to Nathan Hale's *Freud and the Americans*. He agreed and expressed particular amazement that there was no account of the relations between Freud and Bloomsbury. Surely, we both thought, the materials for such an enterprise were ample if anyone cared to follow them up. Happily, now we have the beginnings of this study in *Bloomsbury/Freud: The Letters of James and Alix Strachey, 1924-25*.

James and Alix Strachey, both psychoanalysts, were among the first enthusiasts of Freud in England. Shortly after their marriage in 1920, both were analyzed in Vienna by Freud himself, and were recruited to translate his work into English. From September 1924 to October 1925, they were proofreading their first major joint project, the translation of the third volume of Freud's *Collected Papers*, which included the famous case histories of Dora, Little Hans, and the Wolf Man. At the time, Alix was in Berlin undergoing a complete training analysis with Karl Abraham, while James (who eventually would become the translator and editor of the 24-volume Hogarth Press *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*) carried on in London with meetings of the British Psycho-Analytic Society, treated such patients as D. W. Winnicott, and kept up with the trends of Bloomsbury life.

Bloomsbury/Freud, the editors' preface explains, is an interesting by-product of American energy (or British apathy) in the scholarship trade. In 1978 the Strachey Trust had just prepared James and Alix Strachey's papers for deposit in the British Library, and were placidly waiting, as the literary executor remarked, "for an American to come along and ask to edit them." Sure enough, within two weeks Perry Meisel, a professor at New York University who had written studies of both Virginia Woolf and

Freud, showed up exactly on cue.

It was a lucky moment for both sides. Meisel and his associate Walter Kendrick, who teaches at Fordham University, have done a splendid job editing the Strachey correspondence. They have provided a full and helpful introduction and epilogue that situate the letters in their historical and social context, as well as notes, a glossary of French and German terms, maps of James's London and Alix's Berlin, and a set of fascinating illustrations that includes caricatures of all the leading figures at the English International Psychoanalytic Congress in 1924. The letters themselves are a treasure. Alix and James must be added to the astonishingly long list of superb Bloomsbury writers. Their letters from this period are as clever, uninhibited, and entertainingly gossipy as those of their more celebrated relatives and friends.

The educational, sexual, and political backgrounds of James and Alix Strachey were typical of Bloomsbury. Alix had come to Newnham College after studying art at the Slade. Nearly six feet tall, attractive, slender (and probably anorexic), she had conducted a disorganized rebellion against the conventions of Edwardian femininity. After Cambridge, she traveled in Finland and Russia, and became involved in the English pacifist movement. Virginia Woolf characterized her during this period of her life as aimless and depressed, "a good brain but not enough vitality to keep it working." James, the younger brother of Lytton Strachey, had gone through a period of homosexuality at Cambridge (like everyone else, he was in love with Rupert Brooke) before he met Alix. He too was a pacifist and conscientious objector; he too had tried his hand at a variety of occupations. Psychoanalysis provided not only the intellectual purpose for which both Alix and James had been seeking, but also a strong common bond. In a sense, they married each other and psychoanalysis at the same time, forging two

demanding but lasting commitments.

Despite their theoretical commitment to psychoanalysis, however, the Stracheys maintained, at least in these letters to each other, an irreverent detachment from its institutions and personae. There are sharp vignettes of Bloomsberries and Berliners, such as Sebastian Sprott, a psychologist learning to translate Freud, who "thinks he is practically converted to Prof. Freud's views—only one or two small difficulties still remain, such as Infantile Sexuality and the Unconscious and Repression." Wilhelm Fliess makes an alarming appearance during Alix's bout with tonsillitis; "almost a dwarf with a huge stomach," who wants her to have her tonsils cleaned. As for Theodor Reik, she writes, "I can't think whether it is pure joy in his breast or a pin in his bottom that makes him bound like a jelly & snort like a porpoise."

BOTH Stracheys write in a rich conversational idiom made up of psychoanalytic jargon, German and French puns, and private jokes. James needn't worry about her interrupting his work, Alix tells him at one point, for "if & when I come back bursting with vaginal libido, I'll keep myself going with candles & bananas." James, for his part, is loving and supportive, entertaining on fine points of translation ("shitted, shat, shit, shitten?" he wonders), and full of wickedly funny gossip about the goings-on at the British Psycho-Analytic Society meetings, presided over by "the erogenous Jones," and in greater Bloomsbury, where, as he thoughtfully remarks after one dull Christmas party, "I suppose if one isn't a bugger & doesn't dance all parties are dull."

The "Alix Strachey" who appears occasionally in Virginia Woolf's journals and in various memoirs about Woolf is unrecognizable in these letters. Woolf thought Alix was gloomy and doctrinaire ("as sepulchral as a toad in a hole"). Alix describes herself in a memoir of Virginia as somewhat cowed by the literary set and horribly bored by her one fling at working as a typesetter for the Woolfs' Hogarth Press. But in her own environment, she is funny and self-sufficient, satirizing the members of the Berlin Psychoanalytic Society in comic vignettes of tea-dance tangos, as well as providing an exposition of arguments in the weekly seminars. She confidently and lovingly fends off James's sporadic attempts to interrupt, sabo-

tage, or compete with her analytic training, or to distract her with thoughts of reunions and babies. She gives a racy account of the cultural life of postwar Berlin—the ballet, Max Reinhardt's theater, the Moscow Art Theater, Pirandello, concerts, and painting.

ENTHUSIASTS of both Bloomsbury and Freud will find much to interest them in the letters, but they are perhaps most valuable as historical documents for what they tell us about the place of women and the "woman question" in psychoanalysis at one of its most controversial and exciting periods. Among the more creative members of the British Psycho-Analytic Society were several women who had been drawn to its ranks in a period when no medical training was required. During the mid-1920s, however, "the ladies," as James calls them, were shunted to the margin by the male hierarchy of the association, led by James Glover and Ernest Jones. All had taken up what might be called traditionally feminine roles within the association: Joan Riviere as a translator of Freud; M. N. Searl, Susan Isaacs, Mary Chadwick, and Barbara Low in child psychoanalysis and education; Ella Sharpe in pedagogy and art criticism. In James's view, they were all ridiculous and dangerously Jungian; "Miss Searl struck me as a mere jelly of sentimentality & prejudice," he writes after a meeting in December. "Mrs. Isaacs is conceited beyond words. Barbara's cracked. And though Mrs. Riviere's *morale* is all right, her mind is decidedly enfeebled." Riviere, who was James's rival as Freud's translator, obviously aroused his particular ire; on two occasions he "forgot" appointments to have tea with her. From James's descriptions, it appears that whenever the women attempted to present their ideas to the Society, they were silenced or attacked by the men. In January, M. N. Searl's paper met a hostile reaction; "the only people who put in a word on her behalf were Barbara & one or two other totally anonymous females." On the other hand, Riviere, who criticized Searl, "was considered in male circles . . . to have been purely vindictive and sister-murderous."

Meanwhile in Berlin, Alix's analyst, Karl Abraham, was an orthodox Freudian who had developed the theory of the castration complex in professional women, although he also analyzed

many of the leading women in the movement. Alix never discusses this paradox directly, although she frequently alludes cheerfully to penis envy as a matter of fact. Going out to buy a paper knife, for example, she is sorely tempted by "a really heavenly one, nearly 9" long with a strap to tack it on to one's belt; but I saw that it was a pure penis-phantasy (price 10Ms) & altogether ungoverned by the reality-principle, & I fought down my desire." In conversations with Berlin women on women's rights, she often hears what she takes to be unwitting confirmations of the castration complex; her German teacher is a woman with "a castration complex and a narcissism as big as a house."

BUT THE Berlin Psychoanalytic Society, despite the dominance of such men as Abraham, Hanns Sachs, Franz Alexander, Sandor Rado, Otto Fenichel, and Hans Lampl, was also invaded during this year by a number of strong and brilliant women. First came Helene Deutsch, whose paper "The Menopause" at the Weurzburg Congress "was a great success, only topped by her evening gown (from Paris, they all said)." In 1924 Deutsch became the director of the Vienna Training Institute.

But the most spectacular presence was Melanie Klein ("Die Klein"), another of Abraham's female analysts, who makes her first appearance in Alix's narrative opposed by the men, supported by Karen Horney and Josine Müller, and full of ideas about the child in the pre-Oedipal phase. Alix's descriptions of Melanie Klein are amused, critical, but finally admiring of her intelligence and drive. The picture that emerges of Klein here is of a magnetic, somewhat imperious woman, who seems to have recognized in Alix Strachey the same qualities of loyalty, service, and discipleship that Freud had seen. She rapidly enlisted Alix's services as English teacher, translator, and adviser about a move to London, where she was to give six lectures in the summer of 1925:

Melanie showed me a hat she's bought to lecture in in London & knock her audience—and by God it *will*! It's a vasty, voluminous affair in bright yellow, with a huge brim & an enormous cluster, a whole garden, of mixed flowers somewhere up the back, side, or front—The whole effect is that of an overblown tea-rose with a

slightly rouge'd core (her phiz). . . . She looks like a whore run mad—or, no—she really is Cleopatra (40 years on), for through it all, there's something very handsome & attractive about her face. She's a dotty woman. But there's no doubt whatever that her mind is stored with things of thrilling interest.

Melanie Klein's emigration to England in 1926 gave leadership and focus to the child analysts among the English, and marked the beginnings of a British school of psychoanalysis. And although Virginia Woolf's strong and somewhat mysterious antipathy to psychoanalysis is well known (at a dinner party in May 1925, James remarks, "Virginia made a more than usually ferocious onslaught upon psychoanalysis and psychoanalysts, more particularly the latter"), many other members of her circle were more sympathetic. This collection does not tell us the whole story of Bloomsbury and Freud, nor of psychoanalysis and England, but it surely does give the sense of joy and excitement that accompanied the beginning of the psychoanalytic revolution, and the feeling that in the dawn of this as of other revolutions, it was bliss to be alive.

ELAINE SHOWALTER

Elaine Showalter, who teaches English at Princeton University, is the author of *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture*, to be published by Pantheon in January 1986.

CORRESPONDENCE, from page 6

William Byrd, William Dean Howells, and other figures in our literary history could possibly believe that accusation.

KENNETH S. LYNN
Washington, D.C.

PRIVATE AID TO FILIPINOS

To the editors:

The editorial on U.S. policy toward the Philippines ("Dump Marcos," December 9) suggests two ways the U.S. can pressure Mr. Marcos into making significant reforms: cutting off all aid to the Philippines and reaching out to the opposition. The editorial overlooks, however, that pursuing the first strategy undercuts our ability to pursue the second.

Instead of cutting off aid, the United States should use our economic assis-

tance to reach out to the thousands of Filipinos who want to reject both a Marcos dictatorship and a Communist tyranny by channeling aid through private agencies rather than the government. This strategy offers us the ability to preserve good relations between the American and Filipino people while expressing strong disapproval of Mr. Marcos and his policies.

If we withdraw not only all military aid but also all economic aid, we have nothing to offer the opposition. Moreover, we risk the precipitous loss of our military installations in the Philippines, a loss that would have a disastrous effect on the balance of power in East Asia.

CHARLES E. SCHUMER
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

MORE ETHNIC ETHICS

To the editors:

I am a bit surprised that the only protest to the title of your article "How to Gyp the Japs" (September 2) was directed to the use of the word "Japs." I would think there might also be some objection to the word "gyp," which is derived by shortening the ethnic "gypsy." "To gyp" someone has been used in much the same way as the horrendous phrase "to jew" someone.

RABBI NORMAN M. COHEN
Hopkins, Minnesota

TRB, from page 4

for March 1985. Busy, busy. Also, a two-page-spread photo of Hammer walking down some steps: "As his chauffeur, Andy, follows with the bulging briefcase, Hammer starts for the office. He is frequently there for hours before the rest of the staff arrives, stays until early evening, and works most weekends." Another two-page spread shows Hammer in bed, simultaneously watching four TVs, eating breakfast, reading the paper, and "arranging by phone to have tea with the visiting Deputy Prime Minister of Bulgaria." In 1984, we learn in the chapter on his specially equipped 727, Hammer "was airborne for the equivalent of twenty-four days" and "flew 271,944 nautical miles."

But all is not toil. "Hammer moves among the leaders of the world like no

other individual in history." His taste in celebrities is catholic. We see Hammer unwinding with Merv Griffin, Barbara Walters, Frank Sinatra, Malcolm Forbes (who recently published a similar book about himself), "his good friend" the cellist Mstislav Rostropovich, "his friend Janos Kadar," party leader of Hungary, "his old friend Baron Hans Heinrich Thyssen-Bornemisza," "his friend Bruno Kreisky, former Chancellor of Austria," and many, many others. It's wonderful to have made all these friends. In a sentence that perhaps explains more than was intended, we learn that Hammer has "given some \$14,000,000 to charities which Prince Charles holds dear and [has] become a close personal friend of Britain's future king."

The Armand Hammer legend, woven over decades, has badly frayed in parts due to revelations in recent years. This book does some delicate patchwork. Cronkite's introduction restates the fiction that Hammer is the "son of a Russian Jewish immigrant doctor, turned socialist and Unitarian." In fact, Julius Hammer was a founder of the American Communist Party and commercial attaché of the Soviet Union. The text mentions this in passing, but a large picture caption fatuously describes Julius as having "pursued the American dream."

The legend has it that Hammer became friends with Lenin in 1921 when, fresh out of medical school, he went to Russia to help famine victims and ended up with profitable business concessions. "His intentions were philanthropic," Cronkite writes. In fact, Hammer went as agent for his father's business, and met with Lenin once for an hour. This book cautiously demotes Hammer from a close friend to "one of the few living acquaintances of Lenin," and yet asserts that this makes him "a folk hero in Russia." But then Lenin apparently had a genius for friendship. According to Hammer, "To talk with Lenin was like talking with a friend one knew and trusted, a friend who understood. His infectious smile . . . his intense human sympathy, his warm personal magnetism . . ." and so on.

As for Stalin, Hammer once described him as "unassuming," a remark that may hold the world record for bad judgment of character. In this book, the great mass murderer falls victim to Hammer's only unkind words for any famous person. "Stalin didn't under-

stand the importance of business," he says.

Hammer left Russia in 1930. "Lenin had died, and I had lost my friend," he explains. (Lenin died in 1924.) Hammer didn't return for 31 years. According to the official legend, restated by Hammer as recently as 1981, "my friendship with Jack Kennedy" led to a request that he visit Moscow and improve superpower relations. In fact, as Sovietologist Joseph Finder explained in his 1983 book, *Red Carpet*, Hammer planned the visit and then got a government endorsement, through a senator, from Commerce Secretary Luther Hodges. This book splits it down the middle: "President John F. Kennedy and Secretary of Commerce Luther Hodges sent him in 1961 to help improve relations. . . ."

Hammer retains a soft spot for Soviet leaders. We see him reading a eulogy at the funeral of "his friend . . . Leonid Brezhnev," and a few pages later "pay[ing] homage" at the funeral of Yuri Andropov. Hammer visited Konstantin Chernenko in December 1984 and, according to the *Washington Post*, found him "in fairly good health for his age: vigorous and alert." Naturally, Hammer was an honored guest at Chernenko's funeral three months later. There's a large picture of Hammer and Mikhail Gorbachev on that occasion in this book. "This man is dynamic, he's full of energy, full of desire to make a change," the doctor said upon his return. "I sense a whole new era beginning."

Armand Hammer is an extreme example of the sort of capitalist whose only measure of a government is whether it is willing to "do business"—the sort that his friend Lenin observed would sell the Soviets the rope they needed to hang him with.

Hammer's whole "world," in fact, judging from this book, is one of cynical mutual exploitation. He comes off as a sad man, measuring his self-worth by the size of his airplane, attracted to people solely because they are rich or powerful or famous, and unaware or indifferent that his so-called "friends" are attracted to him for the same shallow reasons. Hammer's idea of heaven would be an extravagant party, thrown by himself, at which dictators and duchesses, magnates and movie stars came from around the globe to toast him, with his own champagne, on his 150th birthday. Not incredible. Just pathetic.

WASHINGTON DIARIST

Little Note

THE LIST OF PEOPLE I personally despise is very short, and the man at the top of it sent me a nice note the other day, complimenting something I'd written. My correspondent and I haven't crossed paths for several years, but he is a man of no largeness of soul whatsoever, and I'm pretty sure that he still holds up his end of our mutual contempt. Nevertheless, his note made my day. This demonstrates Kinsley's Law of Flattery, which holds that insincere flattery is more flattering than sincere flattery. After all, what do I care what this philistine oaf actually thinks about my article? On the other hand, there is a genuine if unintended compliment in the fact that he troubled to write—and the less he meant what he said, the greater that compliment is.

THE "LITTLE NOTE" is a great social institution about which little has been written, apart from a passing reference in the Gettysburg Address ("The world will little note nor long remember . . ."). Kinsley's Law is really just a corollary of the general proposition that all flattery is flattering. The wonderful thing about the "little note" is that, however cynical or stupid, it cannot fail to achieve its purpose of pleasing the recipient. Every New Year I resolve to write more of them. Only sincere ones, of course. But I'm sure I speak for every journalist in America in saying that if you were to program a computer to send me a letter once a month saying simply, "Dear Mike: Superb piece! All best," I would gratefully fill in the details, and come to respect your discernment. A friend suggests the same technique might also work with politicians, as in, "Dear Senator: That was a tremendous act of statesmanship last week." But the typical pol might find such a vague compliment more frightening than flattering. My God, what had he done?

THE AUTOMATIC-PILOT ROUTE does have its perils, as Charles Wick found out a couple of years ago. Wick, head of USIA, got in trouble for tape-recording his telephone calls. As fallout from this mini-scandal, transcripts of all his office tapes eventually became public. Among many priceless gems mercilessly re-

printed in the *Post* was Wick's instruction, dictated to a secretary, to send a note to a Washington hostess. I quote from memory, but the gist was: "Thank you for a marvelous evening, et cetera, et cetera." Ouch.

JUST AS THE AMERICAN PEOPLE had learned to live with the embarrassment of a national security adviser named "Bud," we face the trauma of adjusting to one named "Poindexter." This key aspect of the story was largely ignored by the Washington media, which dwelled instead on what it meant that a man of McFarlane's stature was being replaced by a person no one had ever heard of. It's hard to recall now, of course, when he towers over Washington like a colossus, that two-and-a-half years ago no one had ever heard of Bud McFarlane either. But under the conventions of Washington journalism, the officeholder expands—like a gas—to fill the size of his office. It will be short work indeed to turn Admiral Poindexter into a towering geopolitical visionary or a skilled office politician and pragmatist or a disruptive egotist or a dangerous ideologue or perhaps a respected but elusive figure whose genius is hard to define but cannot be denied. The Washington media conspiracy meets early in the new year to select among these and other options. But whatever we decide, it's safe to predict that two-and-a-half years from now, Poindexter will be a man of McFarlanean stature.

MEANWHILE, we also are reported to have a new secretary of state. Not a different person, but a different personality. Shultz's indignant reaction to the administration's lie-detector plans confirmed my impression that he's the class of the Cabinet. But a live wire? I'm not persuaded. For two days I read in amazement about how Shultz had "erupted in anger" and pounded his fist on the table during a press conference in Belgrade. Then I caught the clip on TV. Quite a letdown. What passes as an "eruption" by the placid Mr. Shultz might qualify as advanced catatonia in most other people. I suppose you have to have been covering Shultz for four years to realize it's front-page news that he can move his arms and talk above a monotone.

AS A MODERN URBANITE, I take all my cues about living from the *New York Times* section of the same name. But the "Living" section of December 4 left me a bit confused. The subject was planning for holiday parties. "This may sound excessive," wrote Bryan Miller—in an article jovially titled "Buying Wine in Bulk"—"but count on one bottle per person, to be safe." That sounded pretty festive. But then along came Jane Brody, the *Times's* legendary "Personal Health" columnist, with her standard ration of party-pooper. "If possible, place the bar in a relatively inaccessible place," Brody hospitably recommended. "Be sure the alcohol is measured, not freely poured." While Miller was urging "red wines with moderate to low tannin and plenty of fruit" as a way to "keep a guest's interest over several hours," Brody was advising that "high-protein foods . . . are best for . . . controlling thirst" and instructed: "keep the cocktail hour to half that and let guests know beforehand when the meal will be served." Aficionados cherish Brody's column for her comic humorlessness, her wild excess of caution, and her unique philosophical synthesis of self-absorption and self-denial. "Be sure to eat something before leaving for the party," she counseled, "unless you are certain suitable food will be offered." And when you arrive, "try saying you are very thirsty and would prefer to start with water." This is "Living"?

"SNOWFALL PARALYZES AREA TRAFFIC," said the front-page *Washington Post* headline the Saturday before Christmas. Thus began the annual Washington snow farce. As the *Post* conceded in the second paragraph of its story, "Light snow, no more than an inch . . . , began falling in the region about 12:30 p.m. [Friday]. By early evening, it had tapered off to flurries." Nevertheless, the entire city ground to a halt. Maybe I've been here too long. I peered out the window late Friday afternoon and actually considered canceling a social engagement. Then I thought, "Wait a minute—you're from Michigan," and braved the fearsome quarter-inch drifts.

M.E.K.

There is a dynamic and growing kind of public service activity on television these days. Network series programs and made-for-television movies are discussing serious social issues, such as alcoholism, drug abuse and teenage suicide. Now, high-quality dramas, like ABC's "Something About Amelia," on incest, or NBC's "The Burning Bed," about domestic violence, raise consciousness about problems. A few years ago, these subjects would have been considered too sensitive for television's spotlight. Today these dramas provide a focal point for community outreach and social service programs, often in conjunction with local stations.

An exciting example of public service occurs on the local level when a station mobilizes an intensive campaign concentrated on a specific community problem. Not often recognized nationally—because they are local—these campaigns yield measurable results. Here are just a few examples:

In Little Rock, Arkansas, KATV-TV's campaign, "The Cancer No One Talks About," alerted viewers to the danger of colo-rectal cancer *before* President Reagan's recent illness drew national attention to the problem. Over 125,000 free, in-home medical test kits were distributed by the station in conjunction with a local hospital. As a result, nearly 1,200 Little Rock residents saw their doctors, and to date 17 have

had cancerous growths removed.

In Birmingham, Alabama, WBRC-TV waged an all-out campaign against drunk driving, with news programs, talk shows, and public service announcements carrying the message every day. There has been a substantial drop in traffic fatalities due to drunk driving in the area, with *no* deaths last New Year's Eve for the first time in memory. WBRC earned a citation from the Alabama Department of Highway and Traffic Safety for its efforts.

In Seattle, Washington, KOMO-TV has been airing public service announcements on children missing from home in the Seattle area, along with a telephone hotline number.

To date, "Missing Kids" has helped to locate 26 children.

We often hear about the power of television, sometimes exaggerated, sometimes underplayed. But there is one aspect of television often overlooked: the power to help, to be part of the solution.

American Television and You

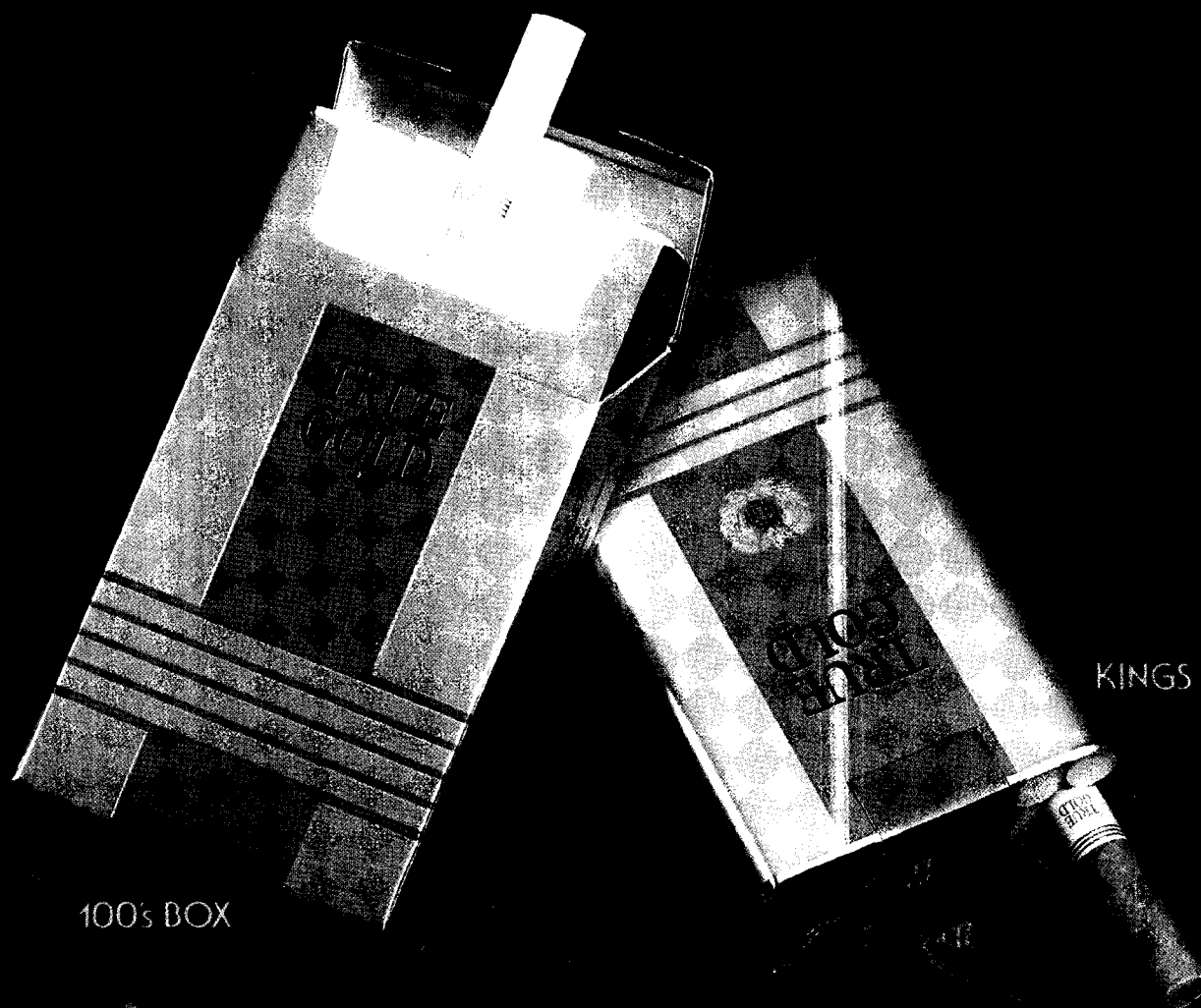


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